

# Living with the Haddocks

by httydfan1991

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Summary: A series of connected one shots chronicling Hiccup and Astrid's future family life. Set in my 'What's in a Name', 'Babysitting Nightmare', and 'Lazy Morning' universe. ( Edits have been made to previous chapters to better comply with httyd 2, and new chapters will now also follow this canon).

## 1. Chapter 1: First Fever

\_I want to once again thank everyone who reviewed and favoured my first three stories. Thanks everyone!\_

\_Welcome to the first chapter of my longer multichapter story. These one shots will be based around Hiccup and Astrid's family life with Siri, and onwards. This first chapter is based on something I apparently did Siri's age to my mum. I laughed so hard when my parents told me the story that I had to turn it into a oneshot. You will see what I mean by the end of the chapter :) Although it's not funny at the time when it happens!\_

\_Just a note to new readers before I begin. These oneshots are set when the characters are in their early 20s onwards, they are married, and beginning families, so if anyone seems to be OOC, I apologise. This is the way I think of the characters at this age, it may not be everyone's point of view of course, but I will try my best to keep them in character whenever I can! I would hate to think I am messing with these characters too much, so if they seem WAY out of character, tell me :)\_

\_\*This story was first published before HTTYD 2 was released, and has since been edited to incorporate the httyd 2 better, due to popular demand and out of necessity. I began to feel uninterested in the story after I saw httyd 2 because it didn't follow canon, so once I got permission off readers, I changed the canon. I didn't do this to upset people, though, but out of necessity, but luckily it turned out

to be a good decision :) Full information on what has changed is at the end of the chapter. My writing also changed and developed a lot over the course of writing this story, so although my writing this chapter isn't all that great, it does develop quite well throughout and I have learnt a lot :) \_

\_I also want to point out that in this story, Snotlout and Hiccup are NOT cousins. I know that they are in the book series, but in the movies there is no evidence that they are. You'll see why I added this note in when you get further into the series. \_

\_Here's the first chapter.\_

\_\* \*\*This chapter has been edited from it's original version to improve the story quality. When it was first written, \*\*\*\*I had not been writing for very long, so the writing quality was not the best. This has now been rectified to the best of my ability without rewriting the entire chapter, so therefore there may still be some issues with the writing :) \*\*\_

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><p><span>Chapter One: First Fever<span>

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup was awoken from his slumber by a loud distressed wail and sat bolt upright. For a moment he was confused as to what time it was, then noted that it was still pitch black outside so it must have been the middle of the night. The room was dim and covered with shadows, but Hiccup could just make out the silhouette of his wife holding a distraught two month old Siri in her arms, trying her best to calm her looking weary with bags under her eyes and a worried expression on her face.<p>

Hiccup frowned, worried, and got up to join his anxious wife and child. Turning towards him, Hiccup noticed the uneasy look etched on her face making his stomach churn with worry.

"Is Siri alright? She's not sick is she?" Hiccup asked her anxiously, taking note of the slight flush in his daughter's face as well as her distressed cries. He put a gentle hand to his baby girl's forehead and was taken aback by the warmth he felt there.

Astrid looked at her husband helplessly and shifted the baby girl in her arms trying to soothe her, but it was no good. Siri was ill and it was up to the young couple to help her, the best they could.

"Has she just got a fever? Do you think she's in pain as well?" Hiccup asked her nervously, as he listened to her whimpers, praying to the gods that his little girl wasn't in pain.

Astrid shook her head to Hiccup's relief. "No, I don't think she's in pain, but you know what fevers are like, it makes you feel awful. Especially if you've never had one before," Astrid said, a hint of worry still in her voice.

"She was fine when I put her to bed, though," Hiccup said, watching the girl whimpering in her mother's arms.

Astrid gave Hiccup a sad smile. "That's the thing with kids; they can be fine one hour and off the next," Astrid replied. Hiccup could tell in her voice that she was worried but she was putting on an act to hide the fact.

Hiccup placed an arm around Astrid's shoulders and gave her a reassuring kiss on her forehead, making her smile appreciatively and lay her head on his shoulder while trying to rock Siri at the same time. Hiccup always knew when she needed some support or comfort, and for that she was grateful.

"Maybe she just has a bug or something? Babies can be sick like this often don't they?" suggested Hiccup hopefully as he felt his daughter's forehead again and found it wasn't as hot as he originally thought, but still warm.

Astrid nodded. "Yeah they can be, I guess. Seeing her like this is worse than I thought it would ever be though. She sounds so miserable," Astrid said sadly and Hiccup rubbed her shoulders gently in reassurance.

"Could she have some fever herbs, maybe?" Hiccup suggested, but he deflated a little when Astrid shook her head.

"She's too young," she said. "At her age, the best we can do is to try and cool her down with a wet cloth, and hope she sleeps it off." Hearing the baby girl whimper again, she cuddled Siri closer to her body with a soft coo.

Hiccup sighed, but agreed with Astrid's judgment; she was too young to drink the tea needed to consume the herbs, but that didn't make Hiccup feel less hopeless on what to do.

"Why don't you go downstairs and get a cold cloth for head?" Astrid suggested. "It's better than nothing at least. Take Toothless with you-" Astrid added, with a nod to her the Night Fury in the corner of the room, who seemed to be pacing around, emitting worried coos every so often, "-he's as edgy as you are, and it's not helping anyone."

Hiccup nodded, and gave his still whimpering daughter a gentle kiss on her warm forehead, before gesturing to Toothless to come with him. Toothless looked at Siri nervously, not wanting to leave her, but followed his rider downstairs nonetheless, leaving Astrid alone for the moment with the sick baby girl.

Upon reaching the lower level of the house, Hiccup proceeded to get a cold cloth for his daughter's head, hoping that this strategy would at least give the little girl some relief from the fever making her feel so unhappy. Hiccup felt so useless in the fact that he couldn't do much for the little girl, considering her age, and Toothless nudged up to his human in an effort to comfort him, making Hiccup smile gratefully at his friend. Toothless may not have gotten Hiccup's full attention anymore, but their bond was still as strong as it had ever been.

Hiccup suddenly heard Astrid give a yelp from the bedroom, and he and Toothless both froze. Why had Astrid yelped like that? Then Astrid's voice came from the bedroom.

"Er, Hiccup, could you come back up here please!?" Astrid called out in a pleading voice. Hiccup's face instantly paled, thinking the worst, and he and Toothless, both bolted back upstairs, where Astrid was holding Siri a little further away from her body than she had been when they'd left the room, with a look of revulsion, fixed on her face. Hiccup was about to ask what was wrong, when he suddenly saw exactly what was causing Astrid's behaviour.

Siri seemed to have been sick. She hadn't so much as thrown up on Astrid's nightgown though, she'd thrown up in it, as well as on it; and Astrid was beginning to look slightly nauseous herself, the more she willed herself not to look at the mess.

Toothless shuddered and stuck his tongue out at the mess on Astrid before retreating from the room. If there was one thing the dragon wouldn't stick around for, it was vomit; and this was more than the Night Fury ever wanted to see, regardless of who made it. Hiccup couldn't blame the dragon for his quick exit as Hiccup cringed himself before giving out a sympathetic laugh at the scene in front of him.

"Oh gods, what a mess, are you two alright?" Hiccup asked gently as he went over to investigate.

Astrid glared daggers towards her husband. "Do I look alright Hiccup?" she asked him in disgust. "I've just been used as a bucket!" A look of revulsion came over her face as Astrid looked down at her soiled nightgown. "Urgh...It's everywhere," she shuddered, as she tried not to look at the mess. "I swear there's more inside than out."

Hiccup snorted at that comment, but this just caused Astrid to just more irritated than before. She wasn't in the mood to see the funny side of it, when she was the one who was covered in their daughter's mess.

"Oh, I'm glad you find it funny," Astrid breathed through her teeth. "But do you think you could take Siri before I add to the mess as well?!"

Hiccup quickly shut up, and gave his wife an apologetic look. "Sorry, I know it's not funny; it's just the look of your face was priceless! Here," Hiccup held out his arms for the baby girl, "give me Siri, I'll clean her up so you can clean yourself up. Have you got a spare nightgown?" Hiccup asked her quietly as Astrid gently passed a calmer Siri to Hiccup trying not to throw up herself.

"Yes I do. Now if you excuse me, I need to go clean up before the mess gets any bigger," Astrid said quickly as she rushed out the room, looking slightly greenish herself at having throw up all down her nightgown.

Hiccup quickly turned his attention back to his baby girl, who was still whimpering a little, but was a lot calmer than she had been, and when Hiccup placed his hand to her forehead, he was relieved to find that it was cooler than before, but it was still a fever at present.

"You seem better Siri," Hiccup noted with relief. "Obviously whatever was in your system, you got out; even if it was all over your mummy."

Have to admit though, it was a good shot," Hiccup said in amusement as he carefully cleaned the remaining mess from his daughters face, before changing her clothes and sitting down in the rocking chair with her cuddled in his loving arms, where Siri looked up at her daddy, slowly calming down despite the last lingering fever.

Hiccup heard a noise at the door and noticed Toothless peeking through the open door, obviously wondering if it was safe to come in, and Hiccup chuckled.

"You're all clear, bud, Siri is feeling better," Hiccup said cheerfully as the dragon came back into the room, joining the father and daughter by the rocking chair. Toothless nudged at Siri, and feeling the slight, cooler temperature of her forehead, the Night Fury grinned happily at his rider who smiled back at his friend.

"Yeah she's still warm, but she seems to be doing better" Hiccup said with a smile. "You can go back to bed if you want. I think she'll be alright for the night," Hiccup added reassuringly to his friend who nudged up to his rider satisfied Siri was alright, before returning to his rock bed.

Turning his attention back to his little girl, who was still awake due to her warm head, he held the cold cloth to her forehead for some relief. Siri recoiled a little at the sudden change in temperature, but quickly seemed to relax, making Hiccup smile warmly at her.

"Does that feel better sweetheart? It's no fun feeling sick is it?" Hiccup said softly as he watched his daughter's eyes slowly begin to close as her father rocked her gently, keeping the cold cloth to her head and after a few minutes the baby girl had finally returned to sleep, still a little warm, but on the mend.

Hiccup smiled lovingly at his baby girl and gave her a gentle kiss on her cheek, careful not to wake her again, before carefully standing up from the rocking chair, thinking it might be time to put her back to bed when Astrid came back in to the room, looking a lot less green and in a clean nightgown.

"How is she?" asked Astrid gently as she walked over to them, and she smiled at seeing Siri sleeping peacefully in her husband's arms, before she stroked a few strands of the girl's blonde hair back and kissed her cheek tenderly.

Hiccup smiled. "She's doing better. I think whatever she had is out of her system now, so she should be able to sleep off the rest of the fever. How do you feel?" Hiccup asked her quietly.

Astrid shuddered. "Better now that's not over my nightgown," Astrid said in disgust as she held out her arms for Siri and Hiccup handed her over and Astrid placed the little girl back in her cradle, gently removed the wet cloth off her head, and placed a light blanket over the sleeping girl, before turning to Hiccup with a small smile.

"We'll just let her sleep that off now," said Astrid quietly, as she moved away from the cradle, and Hiccup placed an arm around her shoulders, giving his wife a sheepish smile as she looked at

him.

"I'm sorry that I laughed earlier by the way Astrid," Hiccup told her apologetically. "I know it wasn't funny considering what was going on. I just couldn't help it when I saw your face, it was priceless!" Hiccup grinning and Astrid kissed his cheek, before giving him an understanding smile.

"Its fine Hiccup, I know you didn't mean it," Astrid said, causing Hiccup to give out a sigh of relief. "But-" she continued, causing the smile on Hiccup's face to fall, "-next time Siri is sick, I'll let you be the bucket, then let me know how funny it is," Astrid said calmly with a look in Hiccup's direction.

Hiccup's face instantly paled.

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><p><em>So theres the first chapter everyone. Please review and tell me what you thought! Remember, I DO NOT TOLERATE FLAMES, but constructive criticism is fine. I know it wasn't my best, but I liked the idea lol.<em>

\_I originally had a different ending to this chapter based on an idea suggested to me by one of my reviewers, Yondaime Namikaze (I hope I spelt your name right!), but it didn't flow at all, so I cut it and now it will be a part of the next chapter instead. It will be where Hiccup finally presents his gift he made for Astrid at the end of 'Babysitting Nightmare' to her. The third chapter will then introduce the other characters and where they are at in this point of the story. \_

\_Don't forget to review! My reviewers have been amazing to me and I really appreciate it. \_

\*\*\_The changes that have occurred since first publishing this story include:\_\*\*

\_\*Valka has replaced Stoick in all chapters he previously appeared in, although he will continue to be mentioned.\_

\_\* Hiccup has now been chief throughout the entire story, and not since chapter 7 like he previously was\_

\_\*Eret has remained on Berk in my story, but is not mentioned often. Because he and Ruffnut did not appear to get together in the movie also, I did not change my canon in which Ruffnut and Fishlegs are a couple, as it would be too hard to change\_

\_\*For the sake of the story, I have just assumed that Drago was either defeated in the movie, or sometime during the few years of this story that I did not cover.\_

\_\*Toothless is still alpha in this story, but it is more something that is happening n the background, as this is based more around the human characters anyway.\_

\_\*If there are any others I have forgot to mention, just tell me :) If there are any mistakes in changing the canon as well, (such as Stoick still appearing in a line which should be Valka's), please

mention this to me as well. I did not want to change my canon at the time, but given the chapters I was writing at the time httyd 2 was released, I felt it would have been better to change it, to which I now pleased with. \_

## 2. Chapter 2: Snoggletog Gifts

\_I want to thank everyone again for reading my first chapter, and my previous stories; it means so much to me, so thank you! :) \_

\_This chapter is based around an idea given to me by one of my reviewers, Yondaime Namikaze. It is only one part of the whole chapter, but I hope I did the idea justice, and that you like the gift Hiccup makes Astrid! \_

\_I want to credit my boyfriend for helping me with this chapter. He doesn't have a fanfiction account, and he doesn't write or read fanfics, but he has a great talent for writing, and he wrote a few of the descriptions in this chapter. This chapter wouldn't have been finished on time without him! His writing style is very different to mine, so I'm sure you'll be able to tell his parts from mine, even if I did change them a little! :)\_

\_I hope you enjoy the chapter!\_

\_\* \*\*This chapter has been edited from it's original version to improve the story quality. When it was first written, \*\*\*\*I had not been writing for very long, so the writing quality was not the best. This has now been rectified to the best of my ability without rewriting the entire chapter, so therefore there may still be some issues with the writing :)\*\*\_

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><p><span>Chapter Two: Snoggletog Gifts<span>

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><p>It was Astrid who awoke first on Snoggletog morning. Considering it had been snowing heavily for the past few days, the sunlight that was coming through the window above the bed was a welcome sight, making the young woman smile. Looking around, Astrid noticed she was the first one awake; an uncommon occurrence in this household. This morning, though, as the young Viking woman looked around the room, she noticed Toothless curled up on his rock fast asleep, and beside her, Hiccup was also still sleeping peacefully. Sitting up, Astrid looked over towards the cradle at the end of the bed and surprised to notice that Siri too was still deep in slumber.<p>

Laying back down, Astrid waited for the rest of her family to awaken. She knew it wouldn't be too long considering the day. Hiccup was like a kid himself when it came to presents, as was Toothless; even if all he got was an extra bucket of fish for the day. Astrid looked forward to the day that Siri would be old enough to join in with the frenzy as well, but at only 3 months old, that day was long off.

Astrid started a little when she was suddenly snapped out of her reverie by movement beside her. Hiccup was finally awake, and turning over, was surprised to see his wife already awake beside him.

"How long have you been awake for?" Hiccup asked her with a chuckle. "You're usually the last one up, even on Snoggletog."

Astrid smiled. "Yeah I noticed that, but it hasn't been too long; only a few minutes. We still have a few sleepyheads though," Astrid said, nodding her head towards a still sleeping Night Fury and baby girl in her cradle.

Hiccup shrugged and smiled at his wife. "Doesn't matter, we'll start without them," Hiccup said eagerly and Astrid rolled her eyes with a laugh at the eagerness in Hiccup's voice.

"You're as bad as a kid," Astrid told him with a shake of her head. "You and Siri will be as bad as each other when she gets older, Odin help us. Then if Toothless joins in, I'll be the only adult in a house full of over excited kids," Astrid joked.

"Well, thank you, I try," Hiccup quipped, making Astrid roll her eyes again; but she had to smile. Hiccup never usually acted childish, in exception of Snoggletog and it was fun to see. Astrid then looked at the still sleeping forms of Toothless and Siri and gave Hiccup a grin.

"I guess we might as well start without them then. Do you want your present first?" asked Astrid grinning, as she went to get up; but Hiccup shook his head.

"Actually I want to give you your present first if that's ok?" Hiccup said enthusiastically, as he got up and went over to his desk, rummaging around in one of the drawers, before pulling out a small object and hiding it behind his back nervously, a little unsure on how to precede.

"Um, close your eyes...I don't want you to see the present just yet," Hiccup said nervously as he tried to keep the present hidden.

Astrid rolled her eyes in amusement at Hiccup's nervousness. "Hiccup, you're going to give me the present anyway, why hide it?" she asked with a low chuckle.

Hiccup smiled at her. "I want it to be special when you see it," he said. "Can you just close your eyes? You'll see it in a minute I promise" Hiccup asked her pleadingly and with a sigh, Astrid did as she was asked. As she did, she heard Hiccup approach her slowly, before she felt Hiccup's hands brush against her neck as he clipped the object up. Astrid could tell it was a necklace, which was cold and metal as it came to rest on her chest, before Hiccup gave her a gentle kiss on the cheek, moving his hands down to her shoulders.

"Alright, you can open your eyes," Hiccup said gently.

Astrid slowly opened her eyes and looked down at the present around her neck, gasping as she saw a beautiful oval shaped metal locket, engraved with both pictures and writing. Engraved in the centre of the locket was a sword and an axe crossed representing Hiccup and Astrid. Below this, were two pieces of dragon scale from Toothless and Stormfly under the respective weapon which of course represented the dragons in their lives. The locket could obviously open up too,



but it was the writing around the edge of the locket that had Astrid suddenly bring a hand to her mouth in shock, as she tried to hold back a sob and Hiccup smiled, expecting this reaction.

The writing around the locket read 'Min sanne elsker', meaning 'my true love' in traditional language. This expression was hardly ever used on Berk and when it was, held great meaning for the couple saying it to each other. Telling someone that they were your 'sanne elsker' was the most ultimate symbol of love and devotion and even Hiccup and Astrid had only used it twice in their lives. The first was when Hiccup proposed, and the other in the vows at their wedding. Hearing, or in this case, reading it in everyday life was special which was why it meant so much to Astrid.

"Oh Hiccup," Astrid choked out tearfully. "It's beautiful, but why did you make it?"

Hiccup smiled lovingly at her and held her hands in his gently. "Do you remember the present I went to make you, the day I first took care of Siri?" asked Hiccup gently.

Astrid looked up at him in astonishment. "I thought you were joking about that!" she exclaimed. "So you went to the forge and made this? But, why?" asked Astrid quietly.

Hiccup shrugged, giving her a small smile. "I wanted you to know how much you mean to both of us," he stated simply. "You carried Siri for 9 months, were in labour with her for 12 hours and then coped with her screaming when I left the house without help for almost a month." He smiled at Astrid warmly. "I made this because I love you and you deserved it," Hiccup said with a hint of emotion in his voice.

Astrid looked at the locket before flicking her eyes up into her husband's, unable to say anything. The locket was beautiful, and the most amazing present she had ever received from Hiccup, but found herself utterly speechless to say this. The next instant she jumped into his arms and wrapped her arms around his waist, knocking the air out of him as tears began to spill out of her eyes in happiness.

"I love you too," Astrid mumbled into his shoulder and Hiccup chuckled as he wrapped his arms around her tighter in response, before kissing the top of her head.

"Well milady, I believe I have made you speechless," Hiccup said chuckling and Astrid laughed into his chest, before she looked up at Hiccup with a watery smile.

"Whose fault is that?" she chuckled. "Hiccup, this locket is beautiful, thank you so much. I will never take this off," she said emotionally as she held the locket to her heart. Hiccup smiled back at her happily, before cupping her cheek and pulling her to his lips in a passionate, yet gentle kiss. Astrid's eyelids fluttered closed as she melted into Hiccup's embrace, kissing him back with every bit as much passion as he was. Hiccup's hand went up to cup her cheek as he deepened the kiss even further and Astrid just responded by covering the hand on her face with hers.

They didn't know how long they kept it up, but after a few minutes, both of them began to get breathless and they half heartedly broke

away from the kiss smiling at each other contentedly. Hiccup gently wiped a stray tear off Astrid's cheek that she didn't even realise she'd shed, causing her to blush but smile at her husband.

Hiccup then took the locket in his hands. "It opens as well," Hiccup said gently as he showed Astrid the latch on the locket, before he opened it up to reveal a small strand of Siri's blonde hair inside, making Astrid laugh quietly.

"Trust you to think of a way to keep Siri with me at all time as well as you. This locket is amazing," Astrid said in awe of the little trinket.

Hiccup wrapped his arm around her shoulders and kissed her hair again. "I was going to give it to you the night Siri was sick last month, but I decided to wait until Snoggletog. I hope I was right?" Hiccup asked her, uncertain.

Astrid smiled, laying her head on his shoulder. "It was perfect timing Hiccup," she assured him. "I don't think I would have appreciated it as much after I'd been thrown up on that night," Astrid giggled, which made Hiccup laugh as well.

A small gurgle from Siri's cot made them turn. Their baby girl was finally awake.

"Looks like somebody's finally awake. Want me to get her?" Astrid asked Hiccup eagerly, as she moved to get up, just as they heard a low coo in the corner of the room. It looked like Toothless was also awake.

"Well that was convenient," Hiccup noted dryly, making Astrid laugh as she stood up to go over to the cradle, while Hiccup got up and went over to Toothless.

"Morning bud, happy Snoggletog. I'll get you your extra bucket of fish when we go downstairs alright?" Hiccup told him with a grin as he scratched the dragons chin. Toothless gave his rider a low coo in understanding, nuzzling up to him, before coming over to the bed to watch the two parents give their baby girl her first Snoggletog gift.

Astrid looked into the cradle with a smile, where Siri was fully awake and gurgling happily away. "Well, good morning sweetie, you look very happy this morning. Are we ready for our Snoggletog present?" Astrid asked her daughter with a smile, before she gently picked up the gurgling baby girl and brought her over to the bed where Hiccup beamed at his daughter as she was placed on the bed.

'Well someone looks very giggly this morning. Happy Snoggletog, my little warrior," said Hiccup with an excited tone in his voice, kissing his daughter's forehead resulting in a warm smile from Astrid as she sat on the bed.

"Ever since she learnt she could giggle, she hasn't stopped," Astrid said proudly as she tickled her daughter's belly, making her giggle a little more.

"Do you think we should give her her present now?" asked Hiccup

eagerly as he tickled his giggling daughter. With a smile, Astrid reached over to the desk beside the bed and picked up their little girls gift, resulting in a smile from Hiccup as he saw it.

It was Hiccup's old dragon doll that his mother had made for him. Hiccup had been completely stuck as to what to give his little girl for her first Snoggletog, and had finally decided to pass the toy down to his daughter, with Valka agreeing it was a beautiful idea considering it never got played with anymore. The toy was special to him and he hoped that one day it would be to her too, even if the little girl would know her grandmother.

"I just hope she doesn't react the same way I did with it," Hiccup said worriedly, and Astrid snorted, giving her husband a cheeky grin.

"I doubt it; she's been around Toothless and Stormfly since the day she was born. If she is, she takes after you," Astrid giggled, as Hiccup chuckled in agreement.

He then took his stuffed dragon from Astrid's outreached hands, and lowered it into Siro's vision. "Who's afraid of the big, bad dragon?" Hiccup said jokingly; which Astrid rolled her eyes at. "Obviously not her", Astrid said as she watched Siro over her husband's shoulder as Siro started to gurgle and reached out excitedly with both arms towards the stuffed dragon, taking it in her hands happily.

"Do you like your present, my little dragon trainer? Daddy picks good ones doesn't he?" Astrid said warmly as she looked at Hiccup with a loving smile on her face, and Hiccup smiled at her back, before giving her a gentle kiss to the forehead. As he did so, though, Astrid's eyes suddenly widened.

"Speaking of presents, I better give you yours!" exclaimed Astrid quickly, as she got up and went over to the desk, taking out a present and handing it to Hiccup.

"I can't beat yours, but I hope you like it. I gave Gobber the design and he made it," Astrid said nervously as Hiccup looked at the object in his hands.

It was a beautifully ornate dagger; the hilt was of dark oak, carved into the likeness of a dragon with dark leather wrappings mimicking the scales of a dragon. The blade was pristine, pale steel with a sharp edge on the outside and a darker flat on the inner which bore Hiccup's name in script.

"Astrid, this is amazing! The detail on this is incredible. You did a great job on the design, don't sell yourself short!" Hiccup exclaimed in amazement as he looked the dagger over, before leaning over to give Astrid a kiss on the cheek.

"I thought since you lost your other a while back that you needed a new one," Astrid explained. "I wanted it to be special, so I spent ages on the design, and then Gobber took even longer to make it!"

"That's Gobber for you, but he does a good job when he puts his mind to it," said Hiccup with a grateful smile.

"Speaking of Gobber, he and your mother will be waiting for us at his place for lunch, we better get a move on. Remember we're having lunch there and then dinner at my parents house," Astrid said as she looked out of the window where she took note of the suns position as it moved higher in the sky.

Hiccup groaned in irritation, but got up off the bed, being careful not to bump Siri who was still gurgling happily away with the dragon doll, while Astrid got changed.

"We'll give Toothless his extra bucket of fish before we leave too," said Astrid as she grinned at the dragon, who perked excitedly at those words, making the duo laugh.

"We didn't forget you bud, don't worry," Hiccup said with a grin as he gave the Night Fury a pet on his head, before he suddenly winced as Astrid's fist came into contact with his arm.

"Ow, Astrid, what was that for!?" exclaimed Hiccup in annoyance as he rubbed at the sore spot.

"That's for making me cry!" said Astrid teasingly, and Hiccup grinned knowing what was coming. Leaning in, Astrid gave him a gentle kiss on the lips before wrapping her arms around him. "And that's for giving me the most beautiful Snoggletog gift I could ever have asked for. Thank you," she said happily.

"You're welcome," Hiccup said softly. "Now come on, we'd better get going," he added, as he went over to Siri and picked her up, still holding onto her new favourite toy, before he and Astrid went downstairs, quickly giving Toothless his extra bucket of fish, before they left for his childhood home.

As the couple walked through the village that day people stopped them and looked at Astrid's new locket. This present surprised many of the villagers. Nobody had ever used the traditional expression like this before, and Astrid felt like the luckiest woman in the world. Some of the villagers, in particular Tuffnut and Snotlout, laughed at it and said Hiccup was the world's biggest suck up, while others such as Fishlegs and Valka thought it was one of the best gifts a man could give to his wife.

Astrid thought it was the best Snoggletog gift she had ever received and it was for that reason, that from that day on, she never took it off.

\* \* \*

><p><em>Ok, I know that ending was bad, but I hope it didn't ruin the rest of the chapter! I loved the gifts I had them all give to each other, and I had a blast writing it. If anyone seemed OOC, I also apologise. <em>

\_For anyone who wants to know, '\_Min sanne elsker'\_ actually does mean 'my true love' in Norwegian. Since most of the characters children's names are Norwegian, I decided to use this language for their 'traditional language'. I thought it was a beautiful saying when I discovered it :) \_

\_Remember please review! No flames will be tolerated though, but

constructive criticism is accepted, as long as its kind. \_

\_The next chapter will focus on the other characters, and where they are at this point of the story, and I think you'll be quite surprised where a few are at! Until then, thanks for reading! :)\_

### 3. Chapter 3: New Lives

\_Wow, 8 favs and 11 follows for this story in 2 chapters, thanks guys, that means a lot! \_

\_As stated in the previous chapter, this chapter is all about the other characters and where they are at in this point of the story. Well, mainly Snotlout, but you'll still know about the other characters of course. If anyone seems OOC I apologise, as I'm not as strong with the other characters as I am with Hiccup and Astrid.\_

\_Also, thankyou for the question asked by Oro Rosa in the reviews. I didn't think it was necessary to finish off the chapter, so no I won't be, I'm sorry :) Your question though did help me to fine tune my idea for the next chapter, and for that I thank you! So, you may not have seen Hiccup and Astrid interact with their families in the last chapter, but you will in the next, just for a different event! :) I hope that's a good compromise.\_

\_\* \*\*This chapter has been edited from it's original version to improve the story quality. When it was first written, \*\*\*\*I had not been writing for very long, so the writing quality was not the best. This has now been rectified to the best of my ability without rewriting the entire chapter, so therefore there may still be some issues with the writing :) \*\*\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 3: New Lives<span>

\* \* \*

><p>Snotlout Jorgenson had never been as petrified in his entire life as he was at this moment. Standing outside the front door of his house, he cringed as he heard his wife screaming from the bedroom at the top level. She had been in labour for over 12 hours, with no end in sight, and never in his life had Snotlout felt so useless. As the young man stood there, he wondered how his life had changed so quickly in the space of the past year. Oh yeah; he'd been forced into an arranged marriage.<p>

Just over a year before, Hiccup and Astrid were the only ones in their little group that were happily married; Fishlegs and Ruffnut had been going out for 2 years, while Snotlout and Tuffnut were contentedly lapping up the bachelor life. Until Snotlout's parents got involved that is.

At the beginning of the previous year, Snotlout had turned 22; and with Astrid happily married to Hiccup, and Ruffnut dating Fishlegs, Spitelout and Thera, Snotlout's father and mother, had realised that he had lost all chances with the two girls his age. It was in this realisation that they had decided, against Snotlout's wishes, to play

matchmaker themselves, much to Snotlout's displeasure.

The result in this arrangement was a young Viking woman, 4 years Snotlout's junior, by the name of Anna. At 18 years old, Anna was a very quiet and shy young woman, with long wavy blonde hair, mud brown eyes, and with a skinny build, similar to that of Astrid's. Neither party was happy with this arrangement, nor were they happy with having their parents decide their lives. Both made it quite clear to each other that neither of them were happy with this arrangement, but in the interests of their parents, agreed to give it a shot.

Their first meeting hadn't been smooth sailing though. The day that Snotlout and Anna first met, he made a crucial mistake: he upset his wife-to-be. He thought that he could walk into the house and all over Anna like he did with anyone else; he was Snotlout Jorgenson after all! Anna did not like this. The young woman may have been quiet and shy in nature, but she wasn't going to tolerate this behaviour! Anna had given Snotlout a piece of her mind, and told him exactly what she thought of his behaviour and of him in such a way that Snotlout was in awe of her, yet scared. He quickly realised this marriage wasn't going to be as dull as he imagined it would be.

After this meeting, the two had tried to get along as best as they could. If they were going to be married, they had to at least be able to tolerate one another. After the incident at their first meeting though, both of them gradually learnt what not to do while trying to get to know each other. Anna still wasn't impressed on Snotlout's attitude, and Snotlout wasn't big on being told off, but they tried their best to make it work. They spent hours together getting to know each other and getting to know each other's dragons, family, and friends. By the time the wedding came around, both had a fondness neither could explain towards one another, and their relationship gradually improved.

The pair were married three months after their first meeting, and had quickly settled into married life. Both Hookfang, and Anna's Nadder, Freya, got along quite well with both each other and their riders other half. Living in the same house brought the pair closer, and that fondness turned into a mutual love. Anna still didn't like Snotlout's arrogance, but she never let him get away with it, and she always spoke her mind, despite her shyness. Just when their relationship was finally sorted though, Anna discovered she was pregnant.

The couple had only been married for 3 months by this time, and were quite surprised. They hadn't planned on having a child so early, and were quite anxious on the new development. Lucky for Anna, though, Astrid had been pregnant with Siri at this time, and her and Hiccup were always on hand to quell the couples fears, even after Siri was born five months before. Now, only eleven months into their nuptials, Anna had gone into labour at around 8pm the previous night. 12 hours later, the young woman was still in labour, with no end in sight, making Snotlout more anxious than he'd ever been in his life.

\* \* \*

><p>Snotlout was snapped out of his thoughts when Fishlegs' voice came to his attention.<p>

"Hey Snotlout, why aren't you inside?" Fishlegs asked anxiously as he

and Ruffnut came over to the father-to-be. "Isn't Anna still in labour?"

Snotlout sighed and leant back onto the wall of the house. "It's been twelve hours and counting," Snotlout confirmed nervously as he looked up towards his bedroom window with a sigh. "She kept screaming at me, so I thought it was best to leave."

"She's having a baby, of course she'd be screaming," Fishlegs said calmly, before the three of them winced as they heard Anna give out the worst scream yet, making Snotlout moan anxiously as it continued.

"How long is this going to go on for?!" he moaned restlessly. "I can't stand hearing her scream much longer."

"What's going on?" asked Hiccup in confusion, as he and Astrid joined them with five month old Siri cradled in Hiccup's arms. Snotlout frowned, and then remembered that Hiccup and Astrid had been at home when Anna had gone into labour the previous night; of course they didn't know.

"Anna went into labour last night, and she's still going," Snotlout explained to them, just as Anna's sudden scream confirmed this, making Snotlout cringe once again.

Hiccup looked at Snotlout in amazement. "If Anna's in labour, why in the name of Thor aren't you inside with her?!" Hiccup exclaimed angrily, while Astrid beside him gave Snotlout an irate look.

"She doesn't want me in there!" Snotlout exclaimed angrily with a heated look towards his chief. "Every time I go back in there, she just screams at me to go away! What am I supposed to do?"

Hiccup looked at Snotlout in disbelief, as did the others, including Tuffnut, who even knew that this was the wrong way to approach this situation.

"Snotlout, Anna's in the worst pain she'll ever be in her whole life! Of course she'll scream at you!" Astrid exclaimed incredulously, shaking her head at Snotlout's attitude. Do you think Hiccup got away with not being yelled at when I had Siri?"

"I got yelled, sworn and glared at for hours. Not to mention I was threatened to be mutilated in certain areas, as well as being screamed at to leave her alone, yet I still stayed. How could I not when Astrid was in that much pain?" Hiccup said in exasperation.

"Anna would be more likely to actually mutilate me, never mind threaten!" Snotlout countered. "I mean, you have seen her angry haven't you?" Snotlout asked Hiccup and Astrid as he turned towards them.

"She might if you don't get back in there! You're supposed to be her husband, now act like it!" exclaimed Astrid angrily, and Ruffnut and Tuffnut both sniggered at the thought of Anna being angry enough to do what Snotlout said.

"She won't do anything Snotlout, just get back in there," Fishlegs

said calmly. "No matter what she says, she'll want you in there with her. Heck," he looked over at Ruffnut with a smile, "I'd stay if it was Ruff, no matter what she said," making Ruffnut chuckle at her now husband.

"Keep me out of this; you won't have to do that for a long time!" Ruffnut exclaimed, throwing her hands up. "I'm not having kids for awhile yet!" making Fishlegs laugh; he knew that already. They had discussed it often enough.

"I know Ruff, I know, I'm just saying," Fishlegs said with a chuckle before he gave her a quick kiss on the cheek, making her blush, just as everyone winced once more as another scream came from the house.

"For Thor's sake, Snotlout, just go back upstairs already!" Hiccup yelled in desperation, as he pleaded with his friend to finally join his wife.

Snotlout opened his mouth to respond, but not before the angry voice of his exhausted wife was suddenly heard from the upstairs room.

"SNOTLOUT, BY THE LOVE OF THOR, GET YOUR ARSE UP HERE ALREADY! I AM NOT DOING THIS WITHOUT YOU!" Anna screamed from upstairs, and Snotlout blanched and raced back inside to join his wife at last, not able to stay away from her any longer, despite her earlier screams at him; causing the rest of the group to burst into fits of laughter as Snotlout took off.

"Well that worked better than anything I could have said," Astrid said with a sympathetic laugh towards the young man.

"Thank Thor I'm a bachelor, I don't want to go through all this," Tuffnut said with a shudder. "Or do I?" he added thoughtfully, making everyone roll their eyes.

"I hope for Anna's sake, this baby comes soon. I don't think she or Snotlout will be able to handle much more," Hiccup said nervously as he and the others decided to sit down to wait for news.

Hiccup and the others weren't the only ones hoping this. Inside the house, Snotlout came bursting into the room and rushed over to his wife, who was fairly flushed in the face and looking completely weary, yet determined. When she saw Snotlout back in the room, she gave him a wide smile, looking totally relieved to have her husband back beside her; and Snotlout in relief that she was yelling at him.

"How's it going? Are we any closer?" Snotlout asked the midwife, Petrine anxiously as he over at the midwife, as well as Anna's mother, Sigrid. Seeing the anxious look on the man's face, Petrine smiled and nodded.

"Almost there lad, I promise. It's about to get a whole lot worse though," Petrine said calmly, making Snotlout groan. Hearing this, Anna looked over at him with a desperate look as she took his hand in her own.

"You're not leaving again," she told him. "I'm not doing this without



you!"

With a reassured smile, Snotlout took his wife's hand in his own, holding it tightly. "I'm not going anywhere I promise," he assured her kindly. "Besides, even if I did, I think either you or Hiccup would kill me. You should have seen him just then," said Snotlout with a shudder, making Anna laugh just as another pain shot through her abdomen. Grimacing in pain, she squeezed Snotlout's hand so tight it went purple, making him wince in turn.

"Oh, something tells me if it's almost time," Petrine said quickly as started to prepare herself. "Get ready, dear."

Looking at Snotlout with wide eyes, he smiled at her. "You've done it this long, Anna," Snotlout reminded her. "You can handle it. All while scrawming at me," he added with a grin towards her which she returned, before her face turned serious. All of a sudden calm, Anna took a deep breath and nodded as she began the final stages.

\* \* \*

><p>It wasn't until an hour after Snotlout had raced back inside to be with his wife that Hiccup and the others finally heard the cries of a baby, making them all look at each other excitedly.<p>

"Snotlout and Anna are finally parents," Hiccup grinned, making them all sigh in relief. It had been a long wait, for all of them, as well as Snotlout and Anna. Fifteen hours all up.

"What do you think it is, boy or girl?" Fishlegs asked them cheerfully.

Astrid snorted. "This is Snotlout we're talking about; he'll have wanted a boy. If it's a girl, his 'manly' image will be tarnished."

"I don't know why he thinks like that, there's nothing wrong with having a little girl," Hiccup said with a frown. "Women are just as strong as men ... they still hit hard enough that's for sure," Hiccup quickly added as he warily glanced at Astrid, who gave a short laugh.

"I don't get it either. When Ruff and I have kids, I don't care if it's a boy or a girl. You're blessed either way," said Fishlegs shrugging.

Before anyone could respond to that, they heard the front door of the house suddenly bang open, and they saw an elated looking Snotlout racing out the door; a wide grin on his face.

"It's a boy! Anna and I have a son!" he yelled in excitement.

"That ought to make him happy," Astrid muttered to Hiccup, who grinned at her in turn as they turned to Snotlout, beaming joyfully at him.

"Congratulations Snotlout. To both of you," Hiccup smiled. "How's Anna?"

"She's fine, thank Thor," Snotlout replied with goofy grin.  
"Exhausted, but she and the baby are fine. Anna wants you all to come up and see him, Snotlout said proudly.

"Is she sure?" Astrid asked him, surprised as everyone began to chatter excitedly. "She just had a baby, does she really want us in there?"

"I asked that, but she insisted on you seeing him," Snotlout shrugged. "And I'm not going to argue with her after all that, that's for sure," he added with a contentedly chuckle. With a shrug, Astrid and the others soon followed Snotlout into the house and up to the bedroom, where Petrine had just finished up cleaning up after the birth.

When Snotlout walked in, Anna looked up from the baby in her arms and she gave a small smile to the others, before blushing as Snotlout went over and gave her a kiss on the forehead.

"Hey Anna, how are you feeling?" Hiccup asked her gently as he and the others went over to her, where she smiled at them with a weary look on her face.

"Exhausted, but I'm ok," she said. "It was worth it. He looks like Snotlout don't you think?" she asked the group as she moved a bit of the blanket to show the baby boy to everyone.

"Wow, look at all his hair! Are you sure that's a newborn!?" Ruffnut exclaimed in amazement, making everyone burst into fits of laughter. She was right though; the baby boy did indeed have a lot of hair, with a great mop of dark brown hair sticking up at odd angles.

"He's so...squishy looking," said Tuffnut stupidly, earning him a glare from the new father.

"Hey that's my son you're talking about!" Snotlout said in annoyance, and Tuffnut grinned sheepishly before quickly shut up.

"Congratulations Anna, Snotlout, he's amazing. Have you named him yet?" Astrid asked them, ignoring the previous comment as she beamed at the proud parents.

Snotlout laughed. "I wanted to name him, but Anna wouldn't let me," said Snotlout, as Anna gave him an incredulous look.

"You wanted to name him Snotlout Junior, of course I said no!" Anna exclaimed with a giggle. "I love you, but that's not happening!" she added with a glance to him, which made everyone laugh as Snotlout's face reddened.

"Thanks Anna, I feel the love," said Snotlout dryly, but he smiled at her, and she beamed lovingly back at him.

"So, what did you name him?" asked Fishlegs curiously and Anna and Snotlout looked at everyone with very proud smiles.

"Lennart. Our son's name is Lennart Snotlout Jorgenson," Anna announced proudly.

\* \* \*

><p><em>For anyone who wants to know, Lennart is a Nordic name meaning 'Lion Strong' :) Also, Anna is pronounced the same way as Anna in Frozen, to follow with the NordicNorwegian names I use in this fanfic. Anna is sort of based on me in the fact that I am quite a shy person, yet I'm not around people I know quite well! :p\_

\_In the next chapter, I will get the ball rolling, and age Siri up to 1 year old. Then the next few will focus on her at 2 and 3. \_

\_Don't forget to review! Remember again, no flames are tolerated, but constructive criticism is fine, as long as its kind.\_

#### 4. Chapter 4: First Birthday

\_I just want to thank everyone in the reviews who gave me suggestions on how a 2 and 3 year acts in the last chapter. Thanks to them I have figured out how to write the next two chapters, so thank you! :)You were a great help!\_

\_Alright, I'm going to come out and say that I don't believe this is my best work this chapter :/ It took me over a week to get this written, and I'm a little worried it might be too boring. It's cute and all, but I think I dragged it a bit too much. I wanted to have a chapter with the whole family, including Valka, Gobber and Astrid's parents, but I'm not sure if it's alright. If you all like it, great! :) If not, I'm so sorry, and I'll work even harder on the next chapter. I hope it's alright though.\_

\_\* \*\*This chapter has been edited from it's original version to improve the story quality. When it was first written, \*\*\*\*I had not been writing for very long, so the writing quality was not the best. This has now been rectified to the best of my ability without rewriting the entire chapter, so therefore there may still be some issues with the writing :) \*\*\_

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#### ><p><span>Chapter 4: First Birthday<span>

\* \* \*

><p>The morning of Siri's first birthday was a slow start. The weather was miserable with pouring rain and winds so cold you felt as if your face would instantly freeze. When morning broke, it was as dark as night and impossible to tell the time of day; so you could forgive the family for being late in getting up. Astrid awoke first, and upon realising it was morning, she scrambled to get out of bed while beside her, Hiccup wasn't budging at all, even at her sudden movement.<p>

"Hiccup, get up!" Astrid exclaimed in a panic, as she hastily changed into her outfit. "It's late!"

Hiccup mumbled, but didn't make a move to get out of bed. Astrid wondered if he had even heard what she had said and with a sigh, picked up her pillow next to him, before hitting him hard in the face with it.

Startled, Hiccup's eyes quickly shot open. "Wh... what? What did you do that for Astrid!?" he exclaimed, with a glance towards his wife.

"You have to get up. Everyone is going to be here for Siri's birthday soon," said Astrid quickly as she put the pillow back down, satisfied Hiccup was finally listening.

Hiccup groaned and buried his head in the pillows. "Why is everyone coming so early?" Hiccup whined wearily, making Astrid shake her head with a laugh.

"Well, if somebody wasn't out past midnight flying, you wouldn't be feeling so tired now would you?" Astrid asked him with a grin.

"Don't rub it in Astrid," Hiccup mumbled as he began to drift off to sleep again, and Astrid sighed. This was going nowhere; she had to think of some other way to get him up.

Hiccup heard Astrid's footsteps leave the room, and thinking she'd given up trying to get him up, began to drift back off again. Just as he was, though, he suddenly felt something being placed on his stomach, and upon opening his eyes was met with the sight of his baby girl, giving him a little grin upon his stomach. Beside him, Astrid next was wearing an identical grin to their daughter's as she glanced down at him, eyebrows raised.

"Going to get up now?" she asked him mischievously. "Surely, you wouldn't say no to that face, would you?" She nodded to the little girl on his stomach, who was looking up at her daddy with innocent eyes and a wide smile.

Chuckling at the sight of his daughters smiling face, Hiccup sighed, before sitting up and taking Siri in his arms.

"Alright sweetie, you win. I'm up. The weather might be out to ruin the day," Hiccup said, glancing out the window, "but I'm not going to. No matter how tired I am." A large yawn escaped him, as if on cue at these words. He groaned. "Astrid, remind me to never let Toothless persuade me to go flying that late again. Especially," he added with another yawn, ",the day before someone's birthday."

Astrid snorted. "You should have known that in the first place," she said. "Now, hurry up and get dressed before everyone gets here," she added as she threw Hiccup's clothes at his head.

"I'm up, I'm up," he groaned. "While you're at it though," he added with a glance in Toothless's direction, "why don't you wake Toothless up? He's not budging," he chuckled as he passed Siri to Astrid so he could get changed.

"Leave that to me," Astrid said with a wolfish grin on her face as she took Siri over to the dozing Night Fury and placed her next to him. Siri wobbled a little as she used Toothless to stand up, before pulling on his ears.

"Toofas, up, up," the little girl said with a giggle, pulling on Toothless's ears more, startling him awake. Noticing the toddler, he

gave Hiccup and Astrid an annoyed look, making them burst out in fits of laughter.

"Nothing like a wakeup call from a one year old to start the day," Hiccup quipped as Toothless yawned and begrudgingly stood up from his rock bed, all the while Siri remained clinging onto his leg, still standing wobbly on her feet.

"Hiccup look," Astrid said suddenly, looking in Siri's direction, "she's trying again!" Bending down in front of the little girl, she and Hiccup held out their arms Siri took a shaky step forward; before falling on her bottom just as quickly.

Hiccup beamed at his little girl. "Well, she's determined; I'll give her that. Good job sweetie," Hiccup said proudly as he picked up his daughter and kissed her cheek.

"She's standing better every day. I think she'll be able to take more than one step before long," said Astrid excitedly, just as they heard an urgent knock at the door downstairs.

"Think we should let them in before they drown?" Astrid asked with a grin, as Hiccup rushed downstairs to open the door with a laugh.

Valka, Gobber, and Astrid's parents, Ansfrida and Amund, quickly rushed inside as soon as the door was opened, soaked to the bone, shivering and windblown. The weather outside the door was as bad as they thought. It was dark, pouring with rain and the wind was so strong, that Hiccup had trouble closing the door again for a moment. It wasn't a very nice day for a birthday party.

"Trust the weather to ruin the day," Hiccup said dryly, as he finally managed to close the door again.

"We'll manage dear, Siri won't remember it anyway. The weather won't ruin her birthday," Valka said reassuringly as she placed a hand on Hiccup's shoulder.

"No, but it almost made us late for it," Astrid said as she came down the stairs with Siri in her arms; Toothless following close behind her, still looking half asleep.

"Late start dear?" Ansfrida asked her daughter with a chuckle, noting both the Night Fury's sleepy look, as well as her son in laws.

"No thanks to the weather." She shot her husband an accusatory look. "At least I got up when I realised how late it was," she added with raised eyebrows towards him, making him grin sheepishly.

Seeing this exchange, Gobber laughed. "So, that was Hiccup I saw flying late last night?" he asked with a grin towards the young man. "Don't you think that was a bad idea the night before your daughter's birthday, lad?"

"Don't rub it in Gobber," Hiccup said with a groan, making everyone just shake their heads, trying not to laugh. Hiccup would never learn.

"Hiccup," Astrid asked suddenly, "do you want to give Siri her

present now, or have everyone give there's first?"

Before Hiccup could answer, though, Amund answered that question for him. "You two go right ahead," he said. "I think your mother wants to give hers last, anyway," he chuckled.

Astrid nodded at her father. "Alright then," she agreed. "Hiccup, have you got her present?" she asked him, as she turned him where Hiccup nodded, pulling something out of his pocket. He had been hiding it there so Siri wouldn't find it accidentally.

"Happy birthday sweetie," Hiccup said proudly as he presented Siri with his and Astrid's gift: a small, shining silver bracelet. Engraved on it in fine work, were Siri's name and date of birth, as well as an intricately designed image of Toothless, darkened by ash to more match the dragon's scale-tone. Hiccup had spent many days getting the fine details right on his daughter's name and his faithful Night Fury's image, perfecting it; he'd wanted it absolutely perfect for his little girl.

"Hiccup, that's beautiful. How long did it take for you to make that?" Ansfrida asked her son-in-law in awe, as she watched as Hiccup place the bracelet onto Siri's wrist, where Siri gave her father a joyful grin at the present.

"He spent days on it, mum. Everything had to be perfect, so every time something went wrong he'd spend hours fixing it back up," Astrid told her mother as her face glowed with pride for her husband. Hiccup smiled at her affectionately as he adjusted the bracelet on Siri's wrist, before he showing everyone the device on the bracelet.

"See this?" he gestured. "It helps adjust the bracelet, so when Siri gets older and it gets tight, all she needs to do is let it out, and she can keep wearing it. This way, she doesn't have to stop wearing it just because she outgrew it," Hiccup said, satisfied with his achievement.

"Well, Hiccup, I think you outdid yourself on this one," Valka said with a smile. "I've never known anyone to spend so much time and effort on a present like you do. Especially Astrid's locket," she added with a glance her daughter-in-law's direction with this, where at the mention of her locket, Astrid smiled and put her hand on it. She still never took it off.

"I don't know about that Val, I think Ansfrida could beat Hiccup in that this time. I've never seen her so determined in getting a present done in my life. She spent weeks on it!" exclaimed Amund, in disbelief, and Astrid looked at her mother in surprise.

"Is that the reason I've barely seen you lately mum? You were working on Siri's present? What in Odin's name have you been working on?" said Astrid in admiration of her mother's persistence.

Ansfrida beamed proudly, and she picked up a large object from a bag on the floor, before presenting it to Hiccup. Hiccup glanced down at the object and saw it was a bundled up blanket which was misleading in size - the weight Hiccup felt, despite its size, was considerable.

"You made this Ansfrida? How much work did you put into this?" Hiccup

asked her in astonishment, as Astrid unrolled it and gasped. It was large, beautifully woven quilt, with Siri's name, and multiple species of dragons embroidered onto the squares which made up the blanket. It was quite large, and Hiccup and Astrid could both see how much time and effort Ansfrida had put into this over the weeks. It was an amazing piece of handiwork.

"Mum, it's beautiful!" Astrid exclaimed, beaming widely at her mother. "You must have spent so much time on it!"

Ansfrida beamed back at her daughter, with a look of pride evident on her face. "Well, I made you one similar when you were Siri's age," she said with a modest shrug, "so I thought Siri deserved one just as special. This way she can sit on the floor and play comfortably, and it can be used at night as well when it's cold."

Astrid smiled back. "Well its amazing mum, thank you. Siri is a very lucky little girl," Astrid said as she went over and embraced her mother, who looked quite proud of herself, especially when Hiccup gave his mother in law a gentle hug also.

"It's amazing Ansfrida, it really is. Siri has been spoiled today that's for sure," Hiccup said contentedly, holding up the blanket for his little girl to see where she gave him wide grin, before pointing to the embroidery of the Night Fury upon the blanket.

"Toofas!" exclaimed Siri in excitement, making everyone laugh.

"Typical she only notices the Night Fury," Gobber said with a toothy grin, making Hiccup chuckle and kiss his daughters forehead.

"That's right sweetie, Toothless is on here, along with the other dragons, see?" Hiccup said as he pointed out the other dragons and Siri happily giggled at the blanket, making Astrid beam proudly at her daughter.

"At least I chose the right present. Your father wanted to give her her first toy weapon," Ansfrida said with an uncertain look at her husband, who grinned and shrugged at his wife.

"Astrid started playing with axes not much older than her," Amund pointed out, making Ansfrida chuckle.

"Actually she got into your axe collection and to keep her happy Gobber made her a toy one to stop her injuring herself," Ansfrida reminded him, making Hiccup snort.

"I could imagine it too," Hiccup said with a grin at his wife, who rolled her eyes and punched his shoulder, before turning back to her father.

"I think she's too young for a weapon of any sorts dad, toy or not, no offense," Astrid told him, as hiccup nodded in agreement. " Maybe when she's older."

"If she's anything like me, she'll just injure herself on a toy anyway," Hiccup said, cringing at the thought.

Valka chuckled. "Your father told me how you always managed to do

that," Valka said with a grin at her son.

Hiccup groaned in embarrassment. "Thanks for the vote of confidence, mum," he said dryly, making both Valka and Astrid giggle at the thought of Hiccup injuring himself on a \_toy\_ weapon.

"Well, I had an inkling that a toy weapon wouldn't go down well with the two of you," Valka continued with a smile, "so I got this from Trader Johan instead," and taking present out of her pocket, she held it up nervously in front of Siri. "I hope she likes it," Valka said nervously, as the little girl eyed it for a moment, before her eyes suddenly lit up in excitement.

Valka had gotten the little girl a hand stitched doll clothed in amour; a doll sized breastplate and helmet had been tied to the body somehow with the outfit typical of any person you might see on Berk wearing.

"This is from both me and Gobber, considering he had \_no\_ clue what to get her" Valka said with a light chuckle. "I just really hope she likes it," she said again, as Siri took the doll happily.

"I think it's safe to say she likes it, mum," Hiccup said as he watched as Siri giggled away happily. "She'll probably play with it all day now," Hiccup added with a warm smile to his mother, before going over to envelop her into a gentle hug which she happily returned.

"Well, I think it's safe to say she's been spoiled rotten" Astrid noted with a glance at all the presents. "At least it makes up for the weather anyway," she continued, as she placed Siri upon her new blanket from Ansfrida, with her new doll beside Toothless where Siri eagerly began playing, not even aware of the adults around her.

"Like I said, dear, she won't even remember today, anyway" Amund said as he watched Siri happily play with her new doll on the floor; Toothless protectively watching over her. "By the looks of it, she's probably just going to play all day anyway!"

"Weather still could have been nicer though. It would have been better to be outside for awhile at least," Hiccup said with a sigh, as Astrid gave him a sympathetic smile, before leaning in to give him a gentle kiss on the cheek. As he smiled at her tenderly, though, he suddenly heard Toothless give an urgent warble from behind him making him quickly wheel around.

"What is it, bud?" Hiccup asked the dragon, before noticing the dragon was looking intensely at Siri who was standing by herself, unsupported, and looking quite pleased with herself; Toothless was standing by her making sure the toddler didn't fall or need help. "Hey look, she's trying again!" Hiccup exclaimed in excitement making everyone look around in anticipation, as Hiccup and Astrid bent down near the girl, both with their arms out in the hope that she might manage a few more steps this time.

"Come on sweetie, you can do it," Astrid coaxed her gently, and Siri looked at her mum before taking one little step forward, and then wobbled. Sensing that a fall was imminent, Toothless quickly went behind the little girl and steadied her. Thanks to Toothless, Siri



then took another step with Toothless remaining behind the girl to help her if she needed it.

"Thanks, bud," Hiccup smiled gratefully at his friend who stayed loyally behind Siri as she continued her mission of walking for the first time.

Wobbling again, Siri once more fell back against Toothless who immediately lifted her up again with a gentle coo of encouragement. With a giggle, Siri then took another step forward, this time with more confidence.

"Come on Siri, you can do it!" Ansfrida said in excitement, bending down in front of the girl who was growing more confident by the minute.

Hiccup beamed proudly at his daughter as he and Astrid kept encouraging her. "Come on, Siri, walk to daddy...or mummy" Hiccup quickly added, seeing his amused wife's glare, "you can do it! Toothless has you, you won't fall sweetie," Hiccup told the toddler softly. Hearing her daddy's voice, Siri looked at her daddy, before stepping again.

"Come on, dear, you're doing it!" Valka exclaimed excitedly as she, Gobber and Amund now joined the others in supporting her.

Seeming to love all the attention she was getting, Siri soon beamed wider than her parents had even seen her smile, before she suddenly took a few more steps, which led to more, then more again.

"Come on sweetheart, a few more steps, you can do it," Hiccup whispered with bated breath, and Siri stepped again, before falling into Astrid's waiting arms.

"She did it! She did it Hiccup, Siri's walking!" exclaimed Astrid in elation, picking Siri up and hugging her tightly, while Hiccup beamed with pride, and kissed his little girl's forehead as he placed his arm around Astrid's shoulders.

"I knew you could do it, sweetie!" Hiccup said cheerfully, before turning his attention to Toothless where he gave him a wide smile. "Thanks bud," Hiccup told him gratefully. "You were a big help." Looking quite pleased with himself, Toothless returned his friend's smile with a gummy grin of his own.

"You know what?" Valka cut with a chuckle as she watched her granddaughter's delighted face. "I think someone planned this all along. Did you see how much she loved the attention?" she asked Hiccup, who also happened to notice the cheerful gleam in his daughter's bright blue eyes.

"You know what? I think so too," Hiccup with a amused chuckle. "It can't be a coincidence that she's been trying to walk for weeks, yet suddenly she can do that today. You're a cheeky little thing aren't you?" Hiccup said to her as he gave his little girl a tickle, making her squeal with laughter. "I don't know where you get that from."

"Gee, I wonder," Astrid said, voice dripping with sarcasm, causing everyone to burst into fits of laughter. Hiccup frowned and looked at

his wife with a bemused expression.

"What are you looking at me for? Hiccup asked innocently, making Astrid roll her eyes as she kissed her husband's cheek lovingly.

"Yeah, it can't possibly be you she gets it from," Astrid said to him in a mocking tone of voice. "You've never acted cheeky in your entire life."

"Alright, alright, I get it" Hiccup said as everyone continued to laugh. "But hey," he grinned, "it got her walking, didn't it? On her first birthday of all days...too." Suddenly trailing off, Hiccup's facial expression quickly from cheerful to one of dismay.

"What's wrong?" Astrid asked him worriedly, before Hiccup suddenly looked at his wife, aghast.

"Just think; if you hadn't gotten me up this morning, I would have missed all of this!"

\* \* \*

><p><em>Well I don't think this chapter was brilliant, but I hope it was at least alright. I love writing family fluff and I think I at least had that. The next chapter Siri will be 2, and her personality will slowly begin to emerge, so hopefully that should be interesting.<em>

\_If you liked this chapter, don't forget to review! :) I seem to be getting a lot of favourites, but less reviews each chapter. I don't mind just getting favourites, but like many authors I like getting reviews as they motivate me to write better. Even if you just review to say something was good, or funny, or just great chapter would be good! \_

\_Remember once again that I don't accept flames in any shape or form. I know my writing is not always the best, so no one needs to tell me this. I'm slowly getting better though. Constructive criticism is accepted though, as long as it's kind and helpful. \_

\_Thanks again for reading! Everyone who reads this makes my day.\_

## 5. Chapter 5: The Terrible Twos

\_Thanks again to everyone who reviewed and favoured my story in the last chapter, I seem to be getting a small following, and for that I'm completely grateful! I got 6 reviews last chapter which was the most for any chapter. Not a lot to some, but good enough for me :)\_

\_I hope this chapter is as good as my last. I know I always say that, but I suffer from anxiety and lack of confidence at times, so I never feel confident until after I post a new chapter. That's why I like it when people review, and tell me what they liked about a chapter. It boosts my confidence.\_

\_We've moved forward quite a bit in this chapter. Siri is now 2½,

and in the midst of the terrible twos stage. I hope you all like it!

—

\_ \* \*\*This chapter has been edited from it's original version to improve the story quality. When it was first written, \*\*\*\*I had not been writing for very long, so the writing quality was not the best. This has now been rectified to the best of my ability without rewriting the entire chapter, so therefore, there may still be some issues with the writing :) \*\*\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 5: The Terrible Twos<span>

\* \* \*

><p>"Dwagon, wanna dwagon!"<p>

Astrid sighed in frustration. She thought when her daughter began to talk that things would be so much easier; but combine talking with the terrible twos, and you get this perfect storm of pure annoyance. Most of the time, Siri being able to communicate with her parents \_was\_ \_easy\_, as well as cute; unless that conversation involved dragons that is.

Ever since Siri had learnt how to say 'dragon', she had begun to pester her parents for one of her own. She had been around dragons since the day she was born, and because of this, the little girl believed she ought to be allowed one of her own. Even if she was only 2 years old, and had never even \_ridden\_ a dragon, let alone \_own\_ one.

Today was one such day. Hiccup had gone out early that morning for a council meeting, and had left Astrid alone with the toddler. The day had started out well enough with Siri helping her mummy and Stormfly outside with the housework, playing with her favourite dragon doll. After awhile, though, Siri had spotted another little girl playing with a terrible terror, and the storm began to brew. At first it started with Astrid hearing Siri mumbling about dragons but quickly progressed all the way to Siri's yelling, even making Stormfly wince. Nothing she did made Siri stop screaming, and a dragon of her own was out of the question; she was only 2, after all.

"Dwagon, wanna dwagon. WANNA DWAGON!" Siri screamed repeatedly and Astrid sighed again. This was getting out of hand, and her tantrum was growing; she had to put a stop to it.

"Siri, you can scream all you want, you are\_ not\_ getting a dragon. I mean it young lady," Astrid said firmly, making Siri pout angrily.

"Wanna a dwagon!" the toddler yelled.

Astrid frowned. "Siri, stop it," she told the two year old sternly, standing firmly in front of her, "this isn't going to get you a dragon. Do you want me to get daddy?" Astrid asked the little girl as her face began to turn red with anger.

"What are you getting me for?" Hiccup's voice came from behind, causing Astrid to start and wheel around to see Hiccup and Toothless

walking through the doorway, making her sigh in relief.

Looking from his now-relieved wife, to his pouting daughter, Hiccup groaned. "Not again," he said with a sigh. "How long has it gone on for this time?" Hiccup asked knowingly. Siri had these temper tantrums often enough to know one in progress.

"Longer than usual that's for sure," Astrid told him tiredly. "I swear, if I hear the word dragon one more time, I'm going to lose it!" Closing her eyes in frustration, Astrid took a deep breath, before re opening her eyes. "Look," she continued, with a pleading expression towards her husband, "I don't know what's gotten into her today, but I really need a break, so do you think you could take her outside for awhile? Maybe..." she added as the toddler began to repeat the word dragon once again.

"I'll take her for a walk around the village for awhile." Giving his weary wife a sympathetic smile, Hiccup kissed her forehead gently. "Give you a break," Hiccup said gently, allowing Astrid to smile gratefully at him.

"Thankyou!" Astrid exclaimed gratefully as she gave him a quick kiss on the cheek, before giving him a pleading look. "Just do me a favour, though," she told him, a look of desperation on her face, "just...try to stop her tantrum. Please. I mean, I usually can...but-"

Hiccup snorted. "I make no promises there," he said, "but," he added quickly seeing the desperate look of his wife's face, "I'll do my best," he promised her softly as he kissed her lightly on the lips, before turning his attention to his still pouting little girl.

"Siri, do you want to come with me for a little while?" Hiccup asked her kindly.

Siri looked at her daddy with an uncertain look on her face. "Toofas come?" she asked slowly, turning her attention over the Night Fury in the corner, who gave her a gummy grin.

Hiccup chuckled. "Yes, Toothless can come," he assured her with a smile. "Now, come on then, let's go for a walk." Holding out his hand for the toddler, Siri quickly took hold of his hand, before walking out the door.

Leading his daughter outside, Hiccup held her hand as best he could which was a difficult thing to do when you still towered over your little girl, as well as most of the other kids in the village. Slowly, they made their way down the hill, Siri leading the way, bee lining for any sticks or rocks that were on the ground. Her temper tantrum seemed to have been forgotten momentarily.

"Well bud, it looks like I've got her back to herself," Hiccup told the dragon hopefully, leading Toothless to coo cautiously. He'd seen the little girl get mad at the drop of a hat, and wasn't going to accept victory just yet.

For good reason too; because at that moment, Siri looked up from the sticks on the ground and noticed the same little girl with her terrible terror. Noticing this at the same time as his daughter,

Hiccup tensed, just waiting for her temper to flare up again.

"Come on, Siri, let's go to the forge," Hiccup suggested hopefully, taking his little girl's hand in an effort to lead her away. "I think Uncle Gobber wants to show you something."

Ordinarily this diversion would have worked; but not this time. Turning to her father with a pout, Siri soon pointed towards the little girl. "Daddy, wanna dwagon!" Siri exclaimed, crossing her arms in a huff. Now, in any other situation, Hiccup would have laughed at this point given the fact that at this moment, Siri's resemblance to her mother was uncanny. Unfortunately though, Hiccup had to stop his daughter's tirade before it got any worse.

"Siri, no," Hiccup told her firmly, as he led the toddler away from the scene to a patch of grass near the Great Hall. "You're only 2 years old. You're not getting a dragon." Sitting her down on a patch of grass, though, Siri just continued to pout.

"She gets wan," Siri whined, pointing to the same little girl.

Hiccup sighed. "Yes," Hiccup tried to explain patiently, "and she's five," he continued gently, "not two, Seer." He looked over at her with the same stern face. "It's still no Siri," Hiccup told her, seeing her pouting look staring back at him.

Siri pouted again, her face getting redder in the process. "I. WANNA. DWAGON!" Siri screamed, getting up and stomping her foot.

This was going too far. It was time to end this tantrum, once and for all.

"Siri, stop it!" Hiccup exclaimed sternly, with a firm look towards his bad tempered little girl. "If you keep going like this, you will never get one. Do you understand me?" Hiccup asked her determinedly, leading Siri to suddenly stop screaming and looked at her daddy with a pout. She knew from her daddy's tone of voice that he meant it, so staying quiet, she gave a nod.

"Good," Hiccup said. "Now, Siri," Hiccup went on, his voice dropping to a softer tone, "you're too young for a dragon, and you won't get one until you're older. If you keep this up, though, mummy and I may never let you get one."

Siri pouted again. "Wanna be wike you and mama," Siri said, whose blue eyes were beginning to fill with tears.

Hiccup's heart almost broke to see his daughter so upset. Now he knew why Siri had wanted a dragon so badly! She wanted to be like him and Astrid; a dragon trainer and rider. He should have known. His little girl had been around dragons since the day she was born, of course she'd want to follow in their footsteps as soon as she was able too.

"Oh sweetie, is that why you want a dragon? To be like me and mummy?" Hiccup asked his little girl softly he as placed a strand of lose blonde hair behind his daughter's ear, in an effort to better see her face. Looking up at her father, Siri gave him a tearful nod.

"Oh sweetie, come here," Hiccup said gently, holding out his arms for her, where she crawled into them and sat on his lap, resting her head upon Hiccup's chest.

"Siri, you will get your own dragon, I promise," Hiccup reassured her warmly, stroking his daughter's hair back. "Just not today, ok? You're too young." As she gave him a sad nod in agreement, though, Hiccup suddenly had an idea; one that had him grinning down at his little girl.

"I'll tell you what Seer," Hiccup said in excitement, allowing Siri to look up at her father with wide eyes. "Would you like to share Toothless with me until you're older? How does that sound?" He turned to the Night Fury with a wide smile. "You wouldn't mind, would you bud?" Hiccup asked dragon, who gave out a contented warble, before nuzzling up to both his rider and Siri, who giggled and hugged the dragon around his neck.

"See Toothless doesn't mind sweetheart," Hiccup suddenly with a grin. "So, do you want to share dragons with your daddy?" Hiccup asked her with the same grin, which Siri returned.

"Yes daddy," she said cheerfully, as the toddler suddenly flung her arms around her father's neck in excitement. With a loving smile, Hiccup kissed her hair lovingly; this was the Siri he wanted to see.

"Now, Siri," Hiccup continued a little more sternly, "if you're going to share Toothless with me that means no more asking for a dragon. Which means-" Hiccup emphasised loudly, seeing Siri's attention turn elsewhere. Upon hearing her father's voice, though, she quickly looked back up into her father's bright green eyes, sternly looking back at her. "-No more temper tantrums. Do you promise me that, sweetie?" Hiccup asked her.

Understanding, Siri nodded. "I pwomise," she said sincerely. "I sorry," she added sweetly, causing Hiccup to beam widely at her.

"It's alright, sweetie, I forgive you, but," Hiccup looked down at her hopefully, "are you also going to say sorry to mummy for being naughty?"

Siri nodded. "Yes daddy," she said in a serious tone that made Hiccup chuckle lightly.

"That's my girl. I love you," Hiccup said softly as he kissed her cheek.

"Wuv you too," Siri said with a bright smile as she wrapped her arms around his neck in a tight hug, making Hiccup beam proudly and hug his little girl back, before kissing the top of his daughter's blonde head. She may be a handful at times, but it was moments like this that the young father will always cherish, no matter what.

"Tell you what sweetie. You may not have your own dragon, but you can still learn about them. How does that sound?" Hiccup asked her with a grin as he let go of his daughter's embrace.

Siri's face lit up. "Good daddy!" she exclaimed eagerly.

"Alright then," Hiccup smiled, "tell me what you know." Looking around, Hiccup soon pointed to Toothless, who quickly gave a grin at Siri. "What's Toothless?"

Without hesitation Siri replied, "Nigh' Foory," allowing Hiccup to grin, before pointing to Stormfly, lazing around outside the house.

"What's Stormfly, mummy's dragon?" Hiccup asked the two year old.

"Naddy," she said cheerfully and Hiccup laughed. She knew how to say Nadder, but she chose not to, which Hiccup found adorable.

Hiccup looked around for another dragon, and spotting Meatlug by Fishlegs and Ruffnut's house, soon pointed to her. "What's Meatlug?" asked Hiccup gently.

Siri looked thoughtful for a moment, before her eyes suddenly lit up. "Gronkie!"

"She's a Gronkle, that's right!" Hiccup said proudly. He looked around thoughtfully. "Can you name any others?" Hiccup coaxed as he pointed to the other species of dragons hanging around town.

Siri looked at her daddy and then at the other dragons thoughtfully. Then she pointed to Hookfang, playing with two year old Lennart; Anna watching over them laughing at their antics.

"Nigh'mare," Siri said confidently, before pointing to Tuffnut, next to Barf and Belch. "Zippy", and before Hiccup could even interject, quickly pointed to Eret just arriving in town with Skullcrusher. "Rumbiehorn" she said clearly.

Hiccup was taken aback. He knew his daughter was smart, but she knew more than he first thought.

"Don't think you're getting a dragon just because you can name them, young lady," Hiccup said jokingly, as Siri paused in her naming, allowing her to pout for a moment, then giggle as Toothless licked her playfully. Watching this thoughtfully, Hiccup soon looked at his daughter with a small smile.

"Sweetie, how would you like to go for a fly on Toothless?" he asked the toddler, slowly. At these words, Siri's eyes lit up and she hugged Hiccup tightly in excitement.

"Weally!?" Siri asked in anticipation.

Hiccup nodded. "Why not? You're with me, aren't you?" he said, standing up. "Come on then," he added in excitement as he picked the two year old up and put her onto Toothless's saddle, before getting up himself behind her.

"Hold onto the saddle tight sweetie," Hiccup told her swiftly, where Siri immediately held onto the saddle. "Toothless, you know what to do." With a small coo, Toothless gently took off, making Siri squeal in excitement. Toothless grinned to himself at how excited the girl

got as he levelled off not too high, but high enough in order for Siri to see the whole village.

"Higher Toofas!" Siri squealed excitedly.

"Don't Toothless, stay like this," Hiccup said quickly, and Toothless gave a nod to his rider.

"Awww," Siri whined as the dragon didn't go any higher.

"We're not going any higher Siri, whining won't help," Hiccup said gently and Siri stopped whining immediately to Hiccup's surprise, instead opting to giggle joyfully instead. She hoped her daddy would take her all the time now!

Toothless flew around the island once, as high as he was allowed, before gently landing by the Great Hall. Hopping off, Hiccup took Siri in his arms, who was looking like she'd had the time of her life! She was grinning from ear to ear and her face was flushed with excitement.

"Go again!" Siri said eagerly, making Hiccup chuckle. He'd given his daughter the riding bug by the looks of it.

"Not today sweetie. Maybe you can go with mummy and Stormfly another time though. How does that sound?" Hiccup said and Siri nodded enthusiastically.

"We'll ask mummy about it," Hiccup said, as he looked up at the darkening sky. "It's getting late, sweetie, we better go home."

\* \* \*

><p>Siri was half asleep by the time Hiccup opened the door to the house, and as he walked over the threshold, Astrid looked up from where she was sitting, awestruck at the now calm and drowsy looking Siri snuggled up in Hiccup's arms.<p>

"How did you manage that?" Astrid asked him incredulously, as Hiccup leant down to give her a kiss on the cheek.

"I'll explain later," he told her with a smile. "But someone would like to say something to you before she nods off," he said softly as he nudged Siri, who looked at her mummy with an apologetic glance.

"I sorry," Siri said sincerely, making Astrid's heart melt at the look on her daughters face, before she smiled tenderly at her little girl.

"It's alright sweetie, I forgive you," Astrid said gently as she took the little girl out of Hiccup's arms, giving her a hug and a kiss on the forehead, allowing Siri to fall asleep in the process.

"Guess all the screaming earlier tired her out," Astrid quipped lightly, as she ran a hand through her daughter's blonde locks. "I'll go put her to bed," Astrid whispered as she got up gently, trying not to jostle the toddler, before going upstairs to put Siri to bed.



Looking at Toothless, Hiccup sighed in relief. "I love her bud, but Thor she can be a handfall." He fell onto the wooden couch in exhaustion. "Hope she stays like this from now on," Hiccup said, relief evident in his voice and Toothless gave a coo of understanding as Astrid quietly came back down the stairs from Siri's room.

"She's fast asleep. She won't be bothering anyone anytime soon," Astrid reassured him with a quiet laugh. "Now spill," she said, raising her eyebrows towards her husband, slumped on the wooden couch. "How in the name of Thor did you get her to calm down \_and \_apologise? Please don't tell me you gave in to her," Astrid asked him worriedly as she sat down beside him..

Hiccup wrapped an arm around her shoulders with a chuckle. "No," he assured her, making her sigh in relief. "I just finally told her if she kept it up, she would never get her own dragon." Checking to see his daughter's bedroom door was shut, he then turned to Astrid with a soft expression. "She told me why she wanted one in the first place," Hiccup explained to her gently.

Astrid frowned. "I thought she just wanted one for the sake of having one. There was a reason?" Astrid asked him, puzzled.

"She wanted to be like us Astrid," Hiccup explained sadly. "She wanted her own dragon to show she could be a dragon trainer and rider too. That's why she wanted a dragon so badly."

Astrid was speechless. That was the reason her daughter had been throwing all those temper tantrums? She wanted to be like her and Hiccup? She couldn't believe it. All this time she thought she was just being naughty.

"She wants to be like us?" Astrid sighed. "I should have known there was a reason. I mean, she only ever throws a tantrum when it involves dragons." She looked over at Hiccup. "So, she stopped when she told you that?" Astrid asked, perplexed. "Because I never thought it would be so easy..."

Hiccup chuckled sheepishly. "She didn't" he admitted. "It was because I promised her we could share Toothless until she could get her own. I even took her flying. Not very high of course," Hiccup added hastily, seeing Astrid's wide eyed expression. "She was safe. But I don't think you have to worry about her temper tantrums anymore," Hiccup told her in relief.

Astrid rolled her eyes with a grin. "You spoil her too much Hiccup, you really do. How did she like the flight?"

"She loved it," Hiccup said, cheerfully. "We're going to have a talented dragon trainer in her, I think. I also said she may get to have a ride on Stormfly if you agree to it," Hiccup added innocently.

Astrid sighed with a shake of her head, but smiled nonetheless. "Alright, I'll give her a ride tomorrow," she said. "Stormfly won't fly very high with her on her anyway" Astrid said as she lay her head on Hiccup's chest, where Hiccup kissed her hair lovingly.

"You know, if I wasn't trying to be so stern with her earlier, there was a moment where she looked like you so much, that I almost

laughed," Hiccup told her with a smile as he recalled his daughter's expression. Astrid looked at him, eyebrows raised. "What?" Hiccup asked defensively, with a mischevious grin. "With her arms folded with an angry look on her face, she was a splitting image of you, I swear. Probably explains the stubbornness issues," Hiccup added cheekily, causing Astrid to look at him in amusement.

"Oh yeah, then who's to blame for the obsession with dragons, because it certainly isn't me!"

\* \* \*

><p><em>Siri was a little terror there for awhile wasn't she? :p I hope I also got a good amount of daddydaughter cuteness in there too, since that seems to be what you all like, the family fluff :) \_

\_I had written a tiny bit with Tuffnut, and his possible future wife in this chapter, but due to lack of flow it was cut. This has now been made into a separate shorter chapter and is finished, except for editing, so you will get a double update this week, as it will be up on Friday!\_

\_As always, if you liked this chapter, don't forget to review! And I know I say it every chapter, but remember no flames will be tolerated, but I do accept KIND constructive criticism.\_

\_Thanks again for reading! :) \_

## 6. Chapter 6: First Meeting

\_This chapter is really short as it features a cut scene that was in my previous chapter that I just extended. In it you will meet Tuffnut's possible future wife. There isn't a lot to her personality yet, but you will get the basic idea of her from this, and I hope you like her :) \_

\_Now on with the chapter!\_

\_\* \*\*This chapter has been edited from it's original version to improve the story quality. When it was first written, \*\*\*\*I had not been writing for very long, so the writing quality was not the best. This has now been rectified to the best of my ability without rewriting the entire chapter, so therefore there may still be some issues with the writing :) \*\*\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 6: First Meeting<span>

\* \* \*

><p>Nobody on Berk thought they'd live to see the day when <em>Tuffnut <em>of all Vikings would get a girlfriend on his own. Everyone, including his own parents had thought he would have needed an arranged marriage in order to marry considering his bad experiences with girls. It was considered quite the shock then, when he began a steady relationship with a young Viking woman who nobody expected to go out with someone like Tuffnut, considering the circumstances on how they first met. If Hiccup hadn't been there to

witness the whole incident, no one would have believed it.

It had all started the day after Siri's, hopefully final, temper tantrum on dragons. Astrid had agreed to let her daughter go for a flight on Stormfly and it was when she and the little girl had just returned when she and Hiccup, who had been watching them, heard a commotion by the Great Hall

"You idiot, what do you think you were doing!? You just ran straight over me with that dragon. Watch what you're doing!"

Hiccup turned around to see that Tuffnut, alone on Barf and Belch, had managed to lose control and crash straight into a young Viking woman who Hiccup recognised to be 19 year old Annika, daughter of one of the Village fisherman, who had shoulder length wavy red hair, blue eyes, and a slim, but muscular build.

"Yeah, well you try controlling this dragon when your sister is nowhere to be found. I didn't \_mean \_to do it!" Tuffnut exclaimed back in annoyance.

"Don't try to fly without her then!" Annika seethed as Tuffnut got off his dragon. "You almost knocked me over the cliff edge, you idiot!"

"I think I better go break this up before Annika sends Tuffnut over the edge instead," Hiccup said in irritation, watching as Annika began to back Tuffnut dangerously close to the cliff edge.

Astrid chuckled slightly. "Well, he chose the wrong girl to mess with that's for sure," she agreed. "I better take Siri inside" she added quickly, hearing a few choice words coming from Annika's direction. "I don't want her out here during this, that's for sure."

"Why?" Siri asked her mother in confusion, as Astrid picked her up. Before Astrid could answer that, though, Hiccup laughed softly.

"Annika can say bad words when she's mad, that's why, sweetie" her father explained. "Words," he added with a grin towards his daughter, "that your mummy and I don't want you to say." Siri giggled loudly at these words, just as Hiccup glanced over to Tuffnut and Annika. He winced seeing how close Annika was to sending his friend off the cliff and he quickly turned back with a nervous expression crossing over his face. "Something tells me he's going to need some help. She reminds me of you when you're mad" he said, chuckling awkwardly as he looked at his wife, where his grin quickly faded as he saw Astrid suddenly raise her eyebrows in amusement.

"Oh, really now? Like me is she?" Astrid asked, interested. "Do tell."

"I..." Hiccup gulped, "I...just put my foot in that, didn't I?" Hiccup asked her nervously, causing Astrid to give him a wolfish grin.

"Oh I don't know," Astrid grinned, "what do you think Siri?" She turned to the little girl, who was giggling at her daddy's predicament. "Is daddy in trouble?"

"Yes!" she giggled with a glance up at her father, who gave a nervous chuckle.

"Thanks for that sweetie," Hiccup said dryly, making her burst into a new round of giggles. Shaking his head with a laugh, Hiccup quickly sighed as he glanced back to the fighting pair nearby. "I better go break this up before anymore Vikings get into trouble, or killed for that matter," Hiccup said, nodding towards the scene, before gesturing to Toothless by the house. "Come on bud". Immediately getting up, Toothless quickly followed his rider over to the feuding pair in case it got ugly; well, uglier. The two of them were yelling so loudly, everyone in the village had scattered in an effort to avoid being caught up in it!

"Alright, alright!" Hiccup yelled as soon as he got to them, "settle down you two!" Dropping his voice lower, Hiccup turned to Annika. "What happened?" Hiccup asked her calmly.

Annika snorted. "Try this idiot," she gestured angrily to Tuffnut, "tried to fly his dragon without his sister, lost control and ran into me! He almost knocked me into the sea!" Annika fumed, with a glare towards him, where Tuffnut was a little loss for what to say back, his mouth opening and closing like a fish, before he finally retorted back.

"Yeah well I didn't mean to, did I?" Tuffnut retorted back in irritation. "I said I was sorry!"

"You think sorry would have cut it if you had knocked me over the cliff!" Annika screamed at him in disbelief. "I would have been dead you moron. Would you have meant it then?!"

"Alright Annika, that's enough!" Hiccup exclaimed in irritation, looking between the pair between of them. "Tuffnut," he continued, with a glance to his friend, "you know you're not supposed to fly Barf and Belch without Ruffnut. This is what happens when there's only one rider." Tuffnut went to protest, but Hiccup quickly placed a hand up to stop him. "I know you didn't mean it," he said quickly, "but you almost sent Annika over the cliff in your stupidity. Don't fly without Ruffnut," Hiccup said reasonably.

"Well, I wouldn't be flying on my own if my sister wasn't out on a picnic with Fishlegs!" Tuffnut defended himself. "I was bored, but here she is out somewhere with her husband!" The thought of it made Tuffnut and Hiccup shudder as a look of disgust passed over both men's faces which made Annika giggle despite herself, before the irate look quickly replaced that as she glared at Tuffnut once more.

"Yeah, that was more than I needed to know," Hiccup murmured, before turning his attention back to the Vikings before him.

"Look Tuff, that still doesn't excuse what you did," Hiccup told him, "you could have had Annika killed; so I want you to make it up to her."

Tuffnut looked at him in disbelief. "You're kidding me, right?" he asked. How am I supposed to do that!?"

"Figure something out, surely you can do that," Hiccup said patiently

and Tuffnut frowned thoughtfully, before emitting a loud sigh and turning to Annika.

"Ergh," he started awkwardly, scratching his face in thought, "how would you like to go for an evening flight with me?" Tuffnut asked her nervously, avoiding Annika's eyes, still glaring daggers at him. "Do you know how to ride a dragon?" he asked her uncertainly.

Annika looked at him incredulously. "Do I know how to ride a dragon?" she scoffed. "Gods, you really are an idiot! I've had a Gronkle for 5 years, and you're asking me if I know how to ride a dragon!" exclaimed Annika, her voice returning to higher octaves.

Hiccup looked at Toothless who gave him a look of annoyance equal to Hiccup's. This was going nowhere fast.

"Annika," Hiccup jumped in before things got out of hand. "I think Tuffnut meant would you know how to co-ride Barf and Belch. Not if you knew how to ride a dragon at all," Hiccup added patiently, seeing as Annika went to retort.

"Yeah that's what I meant," Tuffnut said quickly. He frowned. "I think."

Annika sighed as her anger began to dissipate. "Yes, I'm sure I could ride Barf and Belch with you," she said. "What did you have in mind?"

Tuffnut frowned, before he suddenly remembered his offer. "I...I was wondering if you wanted to go for an evening flight with me later on. You know; if you wanted to of course," Tuffnut hurriedly added uncertainly, seeing Annika look at him in surprise.

"Are...are you trying to make it up to me or asking me on a date?" Annika asked him, bewildered.

Hiccup did not see this coming and he looked as puzzled as Annika when Tuffnut shrugged. "Ergh... maybe?" Tuffnut replied hesitantly

Annika looked at him in shock, before a slight blush began to rise in her cheeks. She had never had a guy asking her out before, even if it was Tuffnut. "Alright," she said, her face red, "if you want to take me, I'll go. But," she added with a glare as Tuffnut went to grin, "that doesn't mean I forgive you yet." Tuffnut's grin waned, before Annika suddenly turned away from him, biting her lip in a slight grin of her own. "I'll meet you at the docks at sunset!" she called back as she raced off, her face burning as hot as a dragon's flame.

Tuffnut and Hiccup watched her leave; identical looks of shock plastered on their faces. "Um...what just happened?" Tuffnut asked in shock.

Hiccup grinned. "I say you just got yourself a date, Tuff, as strange as that sounds. I'd remember to show up if I were you too," he added with a snort as he gestured to Toothless so he could take his leave. "I wouldn't mess with Annika."

"Wait, what do I do?" Tuffnut yelled to Hiccup's retreating back.

"I've never been on a date!"

Stopping where he was, Hiccup turned around and gave Tuffnut a wide grin. "Just don't hit into her again, and you should be fine!"

\* \* \*

><p>When Hiccup opened the door to his house, he saw Astrid was on the floor playing with Siri. When she looked up at him, he grinned cautiously at her.<p>

"Am I safe?" Hiccup asked warily, to which Astrid grinned.

"Oh, I don't know," she said in teasing tone. "Siri, is daddy safe?" she asked the little girl, who looked at up her daddy with a beam.

"Yes," she giggled and Hiccup laughed, before he went over to sit with them on the floor. Astrid smiled at him and kissed her husband lovingly on the cheek as he wrapped an arm around her shoulders.

"So, is Tuffnut still alive?" Astrid asked him with a laugh.

"Is he alive?" Hiccup exclaimed incredulously. "You'll never believe what happened out there!"

Astrid looked at him, bewildered. "What do you mean?" she asked, brows furrowed. "What the heck happened?"

"Let's just say that after all that commotion, that Tuffnut has a date tonight," Hiccup said.

"WHAT!" Astrid screeched. "You're kidding?!"

Hiccup laughed. "I wish I was!" he laughed. "To make for almost knocking her over a cliff, Tuffnut somehow managed to unintentionally ask her out on a date tonight," Hiccup told her, his face blank with shock.

"She accepted that?" Astrid shook her head. "It won't last the night. She and Tuffnut will never work. He's too...well, Tuffnut... she'll want to kill him within an hour," Astrid said, confidently.

"I doubt they'll last 10 minutes," Hiccup agreed with a nod.

Hiccup and Astrid had no clue how wrong they were, though. Not only did Tuffnut and Annika go through with the entire 'date', they also went on a second. Before long, the two were going steady.

To this day, the people of Berk still didn't understand how it happened.

\* \* \*

><p><em>I know that chapter was short, but I hope it was alright. I really think you will all like Annika when I write her more, same as Anna.<em>

\_Next chapter will focus on Siri when she is 3, and will be a

mother/daughter story. I've just started it, and at the moment, I quite like it, and I should hopefully have it up for you all next week, or if I keep writing the pace I'm going by the end of the week! :p\_

\_Remember if you liked this chapter, don't forget to review! No flames, KIND constructive criticism accepted though. Thanks for reading again! :D\_

## 7. Chapter 7: The Accident

\_Wow, I'm updating a lot aren't I? :p Plus, since the last chapter was so short, I worked extra hard on this one, and it's now the longest chapter I've written. Plus the one I'm most proud of. Now that I'm posting it though, I'm a little less confident on it as usual, but when I was writing it I really liked it :)\_

\_Don't worry; the chapter title isn't as ominous as it sounds. It just seemed to fit more than the previous name I had for it, considering Siri gets into a little bit of strife in this chapter. This idea turned into something completely different to what I had planned, but I regret nothing!\_

\_This chapter is really emotional because of what happens in it. You will also see a very maternal and emotional side to Astrid in this chapter that I don't think I've really touched on this series as of yet. I just thought of the idea and then it expanded into what it is now, so I hope you all like it! :)\_

\_\* \*\*This chapter has been edited from it's original version to improve the story quality. When it was first written, \*\*\*\*I had not been writing for very long, so the writing quality was not the best. This has now been rectified to the best of my ability without rewriting the entire chapter, so therefore there may still be some issues with the writing :) \*\*\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 7: The Accident<span>

\* \* \*

><p>A year ago, Hiccup and Astrid didn't think there could have been anything worse than the terrible twos. That is until Siri reached a stage that Hiccup so correctly dubbed, the 'curious threes', called specifically because at three and a half years of age, Siri was now curious about everything in her life, spanning from weaponry, to the outskirts of Berk. Normally this wasn't a problem because Hiccup and Astrid were always there with her when she got too curious to keep her out of trouble.<p>

Until today that was.

Having gone out early with Toothless for a council meeting, Hiccup was to be out most of the day. Because of this, for a majority of the day, it was just Astrid and Siri in the house, making it difficult for Astrid to be able to watch over the curious toddler at all hours of the day.

That is where the trouble started.

Not long after Hiccup had left for the day, Astrid had gone upstairs to do some much needed housework, leaving Siri to play downstairs. The three year old hadn't seemed to be in a curious mood when Astrid had left her to it, so what happened next was beyond anything Astrid could have predicted.

Siri got her hands on Astrid's axe.

Having gotten her first toy axe for her previous birthday, Siri had become curious as to how to throw a real one. The three year old had always watched in awe as Astrid practiced with hers from time to time and because of that the little girl had decided she wanted to learn how to use one too. It didn't look too hard and all the young girl wanted was to show her mummy that she could be just like her!

Looking up at the top level of the house, Siri searched for any signs of her mother. Now, what was interesting about the Haddock house was that the top story had a balcony that stretched all around the diameter of the house, making it easier to walk around the whole top level and easily enter all four rooms in the house. One room was Hiccup and Astrid's bedroom, one was her bedroom and the other two was a spare bedroom and wash room. Near her parent's room and the washroom were stairs that lead down to the bottom level of the house. Theirs was the only house like it on Berk as Hiccup designed it himself as a wedding present for Astrid.

Unfortunately this design also made it easy to check if you were going to get caught out doing something you shouldn't be, which was exactly what the inquisitive three year old was doing. Seeing Astrid was in her room, with the door only just ajar, Siri quietly went over to the table where Astrid's axe was laying. Standing on tip toes, the little girl could only just reach it, but after a few moments she managed to get it down without any problems.

The axe was almost bigger than the three year old and Siri could barely lift it. She tried to hold it like her mother did, but it weighted her down. The same thing happened when she tried to balance the weight on her shoulder like she sometimes saw Astrid do. Holding it in both hands, the weight of it was less pronounced, so with the axe firmly in her hands, she threw it at the target set up in the middle of the room.

Missing it by a mile, the little girl winced as she heard the crash it made upon the wooden floor. Nervously looking up at the top level, Siri was surprised the noise hadn't alerted her mother to her actions. Double checking her mother's whereabouts, she went over to retrieve the axe as an idea suddenly struck her. She may not be able to throw it, but maybe she could throw it in the air and catch it like she saw her mother do. It didn't look too hard.

Taking the axe in both her hands, Siri gently throwing it up in the air. Luckily for her, it missed and landed on the floor, with one of its sharp edges caught in the wooden floor. Grabbing hold of the other end, Siri tried to pull it out as hard as she could, but it was stuck tight. Sticking her tongue out in concentration, she tried again, but before the young girl could even react, the axe suddenly come lose and wheeled back towards her, with one of it's sharp



corners making contact with the top of her hand.

Blood came gushing out in a rush of scarlet and the pain was like a thousand bee stings all at once. In shock, Siri just stared at it for a moment, before tears began to well up at the corner of her eyes, and bursting into tears, she began to scream.

"MUMMMMMMMMMMY!"

"Siri, what is it?!" Rushing out onto the upstairs balcony, Astrid looked down at the little girl, only to freeze in horror at the sight in front of her for a moment, before panic overtook her mind as she raced down the stairs towards her panic stricken daughter.

"Siri! What in Thors name have you done?" Astrid screamed hysterically as she grabbed a cloth, before falling fell to her knees beside her weeping daughter.

"I use your axe, mummy. I sorry," Siri sobbed, as Astrid quickly applied the cloth around her daughter's bloody hand in an effort to stop the flow of blood. The pressure of the cloth on her stinging hand, though, just made Siri recoil and sob harder as she buried her head into Astrid's chest in pain. Astrid's heart broke seeing her little girl in so much pain, and as much as the young mother wanted answers for why her daughter would do this, now was not the time to reprimand her. It would have to wait.

Siri let out another whimper. "Oh, I know sweetie, I know," Astrid whispered softly to her as she got up to collect another bandage. "It's alright, I'm right here," Astrid reassured the toddler as she let out another sob at the jostled movement in her hand as her mother sat them back down.

"Alright sweetie," Astrid said soothingly, "let's see what this looks like, OK?" Taking Siri's hand in her own, Astrid gently unwrapped the piece of cloth around the little girl's hand making Siri suddenly hiss in pain and sob harder.

"Oh baby I'm sorry, but I have to look at it," Astrid told her softly. "It's alright, I promise." Giving her mother a tearful nod, Astrid looked down at her daughter's wound. At first glance it didn't look promising, but at closer inspection Astrid gave a sigh of relief as she noticed it wasn't as deep as she first thought it to be. It seems the little girl was lucky.

"Well, that's not too bad now is it?" Astrid asked her daughter with a kind smile. "It's just a lot of nasty blood that's all." Looking up from her mother's chest, Siri nervously took a peek at her hand and was surprised to find her mummy was right. It didn't look too bad after all.

Taking some water and a cloth from the table next to them, Astrid quickly took her daughter's hand again. "I'm just going to clean this nasty wound up, sweetie. We don't want it to start bleeding again now, do we?" she asked the little girl, who's eyes widened in horror at the thought before shaking her head. Holding out her hand for her mother, Astrid carefully applied the wet cloth to Siri's hand, who suddenly screamed in pain and burst into tears once more. Astrid knew this had to be done, but it still didn't stop her own eyes filled

with tears seeing her daughter in so much pain.

"I'm sorry sweetie, I know it hurts, but I have to do it," Astrid said dejectedly as she kissed her daughter's head lovingly as she continued to carefully clean the cut, making sure she didn't hurt her little girl further. Siri allowed her mother to continue working on her hand, but that didn't stop her from wincing every now and then as kept her face hidden in her mother's shirt. Luckily the cut wasn't very deep, but it did run along the length of her hand and the flow of blood was only just now beginning to slow as Astrid tenderly dabbed at the edges of the wound making sure it was properly clean.

"All clean sweetie," Astrid finally said, as she took a bandage in her hand. "I'm going to bandage this up now, and then we'll let it heal on its own. It's going to be alright," Astrid added softly as Siri looked at the bandage with fearful eyes, but she bravely held out her hand as Astrid positioned the bandage onto the young girl's hand and carefully began to wrap it. Siri whimpering in pain at the pressure, Siri cuddled up to her mother's chest as close as she could.

"We're all all done, sweetheart," Astrid finally announced after awhile, showing the girl her freshly bandaged hand. "Now," she continued, "it's going to hurt for awhile, but it'll get better. You were such a brave girl," Astrid said gently as she finally enveloped her daughter in her arms and rocked her gently as Siri continued to sob into her mother's chest.

"Shh, it's alright sweetie, it's alright," Astrid cooed softly, kissing the girl's blonde head tenderly. She continued to whisper that to the sobbing girl for several minutes, until finally, Siri looked up at her mother tearfully, but composed.

"Does it hurt much anymore Siri?" Astrid asked her gently and Siri shook her head as she gazed at her mother with a guilty expression.

"Mummy," she said quietly, "I'm sorry for touching your axe." Astrid's face fell. Now that everything was calm, the young woman suddenly felt a wave of emotions come over that she had managed to bury deep down while tending to her daughter. Now that she was alright, though, all of those fears and worries she had felt before suddenly came bubbling back to the surface faster than she could stop them.

"Siri, what in Thor's name were you thinking!" Astrid exclaimed exasperated, causing Siri to wince at the sudden noise. "Didn't daddy and I tell you never to touch that axe?!" Astrid asked her. "Why did you do it?"

Siri looked up at her mother tearfully. "I wanted to show you I could frow an axe too mummy," Siri explained to her mother as big fat tears rolled down her cheeks. "I'm sorry mummy," she sobbed.

Astrid's chest tightened. "Oh Siri, you know you're not allowed to touch my axe, though. You're too young and \_this\_" she nodded to Siri's bandaged hand seriously, "-is why daddy and I set these rules. To protect you." Astrid cupped her daughter's chin in her hand as she glanced down at her shoes and Siri looked at her mother guiltily.

"Sweetie," Astrid said gently, I know you want to be like me and daddy, but you're just too young. Especially to play with an axe," she added with a shudder. She looked over at the table with a frown. "How did this even happen anyway?" Astrid asked, aghast, as she turned her head back towards Siri. "I thought the table was too high for you to reach?"

Siri looked down at her shoes sheepishly. "I frew the axe, and it got stuck," the three year old explained nervously. "I twied to pick it up and it gots woose," she said quietly.

Astrid's eyes widened in horror as she realised exactly how this had occurred and felt sickened at what the outcome may have been. Tears filled her eyes.

"Siri, that was a very silly thing to do!" she suddenly burst out, all calmness vanishing as emotions began to spill from her body. "Getting an axe out of the floor is very dangerous; you should have come to me. You may have gotten in trouble, but that's better than what could have happened to you!" Astrid met her daughter's tear filled eyes with her own. "You could have taken your hand off," she said, her voice dropping dramatically. "What would I have felt then Siri?"

Siri's lip wobbled before she suddenly burst into tears of shame, flinging her arms around her mother in the process. That was it for Astrid too, who also burst into tears and pulled her daughter into a tight embrace, never wanting to let go. Siri possibly losing her hand was too much for the young mother to handle, no matter how strong she was.

"Siri, promise me you will never touch a weapon without me or daddy ever again," Astrid said, emotion evident in her voice. "Promise me that sweetie," she said, a little more desperately.

Siri nodded. "I pwomise mummy."

"I mean it baby," Astrid quickly cut in. "I can't bare the thought of my daughter losing her hand to something as simple as being curious. It breaks my heart enough everyday to see your daddy without his leg, but to see my little girl without her hand would be torture. How do you think your daddy and I would feel Siri?" Astrid choked out and Siri's eyes widened in understanding.

"You'd feel sad?" Siri asked sadly and Astrid nodded.

"I wouldn't just feel sad sweetie, I'd be devastated," Astrid said tearfully as she held her daughter in her arms tightly. "I wouldn't know what to do and I would always feel guilty for me being the one that left the axe there in the first place." She looked into her daughter's bright azure eyes firmly. "Promise me you will never disobey us like this again," she pleaded with the little girl, who nodded with as much seriousness as she could show.

"I pwomise mummy," Siri promised her sincerely as Astrid pulled the little girl into her embrace again, hugging her as tight as she was able too.

Siri wrapped her arms around Astrid's neck and gave her a kiss on the cheek. "I weally sorry mummy," Siri said seriously, making Astrid

gave her daughter a kiss on the forehead before giving her a watery smile.

"It's alright sweetie, I'm not mad," Astrid reassured her little girl softly, as she stroked her blonde locks. "I was just so scared at what you'd done. I know I shouldn't have left the axe there, but you should have known better not to touch it," Astrid said softly.

Siri looked down at her shoes. "I know," she said quietly.

Astrid cupped the girl's chin and tilted her head up to look at her, before giving her a small smile. "I love you sweetheart," she said, "and that's the reason daddy and I want you to obey us. Do you understand that?" Astrid asked her gently.

"Yes mummy," she said, before she suddenly beamed, her bright blue eyes lighting up as she did so. "I wuv you too," the little girl said lovingly and Astrid stroked the girl's blonde locks back and kissed her forehead, before taking her in her arms and standing up.

"You know what, I think when your hand is better I should start giving you some basic axe throwing lessons. That way you will know how to handle an axe safer at least," Astrid said thoughtfully. "How does that sound?" Astrid asked.

"I'd like that mummy!" Siri exclaimed with great enthusiasm, causing Astrid to laugh.

"We won't be using a real axe though, sweetie, you'll use your toy one. When you're older, then you can use a real one." Astrid suddenly frowned. "After today though, I don't want you going near one for awhile," Astrid said hesitantly and Siri saw the look of fear in her mother's eyes and got up, taking a hold of her hand gently.

"I won' mummy," Siri reassured her kindly and Astrid smiled proudly at her daughter, before bending down to give her kiss on the cheek.

"I know you won't sweetie," Astrid said with smile, before she looked over at the floor with a slight pang to her stomach. "Alright, why don't you go play and I'll clean up here. When daddy gets home, though, we'll have to tell him what happened."

Siri looked at her mother worriedly. "Do we has too? He'll be worried mummy," Siri said anxiously.

Astrid smiled reassuringly at her daughter. "He'll know as soon as he sees your hand Siri; he needs to know. He won't be mad," Astrid reassured her daughter, who was looking extremely nervous, "but he'll be very upset. Just like I was," Astrid said gently.

Siri gave a sigh, but nodded. "Otay."

"Alright, you go play now. I'll be right here," Astrid said with a smile, before she went to pick up her axe and her smile vanished. She had forgotten momentarily that her axe had a small amount of blood from where it hit Siri and a wave of nausea hit her. She never wanted to use this axe again after what it almost did to her little girl. When Hiccup got home, she would ask him to take it from her sight and

then get him to make her a new one.

"Mummy, are you OK?" Siri asked her worriedly as she noticed her mother had frozen in her spot, making Astrid snap out of her reverie and smile down at her daughter.

"I'm fine sweetie," she assured her with a small smile. "I just need to clean this axe up." She gestured to the blood covered patch on the floor beside her. "You go play and I'll join you in a minute if you want," Astrid said and Siri nodded and ran off to sit on her blanket with her dragon and Viking dolls. With a sigh, Astrid began working on cleaning the blood off the axe, tears prickling at her eyes as she did, but she ignored them, before going upstairs to put it away for now. There was no way she was ever using that one again as long as she lived, she thought, before she went to join Siri on the blanket. She wasn't letting her daughter out of her sight for the rest of the day

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup trudged up the hill to his house. It was just after sunset and he was exhausted, having been at the Great Hall with the council since early that morning. Beside him, Toothless looked as weary as his rider and both were ready to collapse in exhaustion as Hiccup opened the door to his house.<p>

Astrid and Siri both looked up from her place at the table, as Hiccup and Toothless came trudging in and Astrid couldn't help but laugh at how exhausted the two looked.

"Someone seems to have had a long day. How was it?" Astrid asked him with a grin.

Hiccup groaned and plopped himself down next to her with a yawn. "Long, boring and tiring that's how it was," Hiccup said dryly, before he suddenly grinned. "The only exciting thing that came out of that meeting was that Tuff and Annika are engaged."

"It's about time," Astrid chuckled. "Can't say I'm sorry for missing that meeting, though," she grinned, making Hiccup chuckle.

"You would," Hiccup grinned and Astrid grinned back, before pressing her lips to his in a gentle kiss which Hiccup gladly leant in to as he went to deepen it. Before he could, though, they were suddenly interrupted.

"EWW!"

Hiccup and Astrid broke apart with a laugh as they looked at their three year old daughter, who had a look of disgust on her face.

"What's wrong sweetie? You don't like mummy and me kissing?" Hiccup asked her with a grin and Siri giggled and shook her head.

"No, it gross!" Siri giggled and Hiccup went to laugh again, before he suddenly froze, a frown appearing on his face.

"Siri, what did you do to your hand sweetie?" Hiccup asked her curiously, noticing the tightly wrapped bandage on his little girl's

hand.

Siri looked down sheepishly and Astrid cleared her throat nervously as met Hiccup's eyes with an awkward look.

Hiccup frowned nervously. "Is there something I should know?" he asked uncertainly.

As Siri kept her head down in embarrassment, Astrid sighed. "Siri thought it was a good idea to play with my axe this morning," Astrid explained to him with a sigh and Hiccup's eyes widened in horror.

"What!" he exclaimed. "How badly was she hurt? Is she alright?" Hiccup said frantically as he hastily rushed over to his little girl to check on her hand.

"I fine daddy, weally," Siri said as Hiccup took a hold of her hand gently.

"She was lucky," Astrid broke in, causing Hiccup to look towards her. "The axe didn't hit her with too much force, so it's just a cut. It could have been so much worse," Astrid reassured him, though Hiccup could detect something else in his wife's tone of voice that she wasn't letting on, but decided not to ask about it that point in time.

"How did it even happen?" Hiccup asked his wife anxiously as he picked up his daughter, placing her on his lap as he did so.

"She threw the axe and it got stuck in the floor," Astrid explained quietly as she looked over at Hiccup. "Then she tried to get it out and it came out when she least expected it."

"It went back, and hit her hand didn't it?" Hiccup guessed, his face paling at the knowledge and when both Astrid and Siri nodded, Hiccup groaned and put his face in his hands.

Siri wrapped her arms around her daddy and kissed his cheek. "I ok daddy, my hand is just sore. I sorry."

Hiccup looked up at her with a serious look on his face. "I know you are sweetie, but please never do that again," Hiccup said desperately, his face still pale. "We told you never to touch that axe and you disobeyed us. You're lucky that it only got your hand."

Siri nodded solemnly. "I know, daddy," she said. "I never touch it again, I pwomise."

Hiccup smiled and wrapped his arms around hers in a tight embrace, before kissing her forehead.

"You don't think she needs any more punishment do you Hiccup?" Astrid piped up as the thought suddenly occurred to her. "I think getting your hand cut open is punishment enough, but I thought we'd agree on that together," Astrid explained seeing Hiccup look over at her quizzically.

Hiccup looked down at his little girl's apologetic look and her

bandaged hand and nodded in agreement.

"I think she's been punished enough," Hiccup agreed. "She's going to be sore for a few days as it is."

"Thank you daddy," Siri said gratefully and Hiccup and Astrid both smiled at her, before Astrid stood up from her chair.

"Alright sweetie, let daddy have his dinner now," Astrid said. "We'll go upstairs for your bath, OK?" She held out her hand and Siri took a hold of it as she slid down off Hiccup's lap.

Toothless went over to Siri and sniffed her bandaged hand before they went upstairs, before nuzzling up to her gently. He wasn't happy that the little girl had hurt herself, but was glad she was alright.

"I ok, Toofas," Siri said brightly and Toothless gave her a reassured coo, before letting her go upstairs.

Hiccup looked at Toothless with a sigh when they were out of sight. "And I thought we had a bad day bud," Hiccup said and Toothless gave his friend a sad coo in agreement.

"I also think Astrid is more worried than she's letting on too," Hiccup sighed. "I'll ask her about it tonight. She can't keep this bottled up."

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup knew he was right in his assumption when he and Astrid prepared to go to bed later that night. Astrid had spent a long while with Siri when she had put her to bed, and then she loitered around outside the door for a little while longer afterwards, only leaving when Hiccup dragged her away. It was like she was afraid of leaving Siri on her own and Hiccup knew he had to confront her about it.<p>

Hiccup knew for sure that there was something going on with her, more than she was letting on. when Astrid barely spoke when she got ready for bed.

"Astrid, what's wrong?" Hiccup asked her worriedly. "You haven't been yourself all night, now spill. Why are you hovering around Siri so much when you said she was fine? I know it must have been scary when it happened, but is there something else you're not telling me?" Hiccup asked her coaxingly, wrapping an arm around Astrid's shoulders, before he was suddenly taken aback at the angry glare she gave him.

"Scary?" she asked him incredulously. She scoffed. "More like terrifying!" She gave him a fierce look. "Do you have any idea what it was like for me to suddenly hear our daughter scream and to come out to see her hand all bloodied up!" Hiccup opened his mouth to answer, but Astrid cut him off. "No, you don't," she fumed. "I thought our daughter had lost her hand, so forgive me for being a little protective right now!"

"Astrid, I know that must have been awful," Hiccup said gently, as he rubbed her shoulder. "How do you think I felt when you told me earlier?" He looked at her with a worried smile. "Astrid I know you,

and I know when you're keeping something from me. I can tell in your voice. Now what is it?" Hiccup asked her patiently.

"I just told you, I thought our daughter had lost her hand!" Astrid retorted angrily, yanking herself away from Hiccup's touch. "You're not the one who came out of our room, and saw her bloodied hand, with my axe lying next to her!" Astrid's sapphire eyes filled with tears suddenly. "Hiccup," she said, quieter, "we knew she was getting into everything lately and yet I still left that axe there. I would have been the one responsible if our daughter lost her hand," Astrid explained huskily, as her throat began to constrict and she clenched her fist angrily as she glanced back at Hiccup. "My daughter could have lost her hand at three years old, Hiccup all because I'm an idiot!"

Hiccup was stunned. His wife was blaming herself for what almost happened; that's why she was so overprotective. Pulling her gently back towards him, Hiccup carefully stroked her blonde hair back with a loving hand.

"Astrid, it wasn't your fault. You thought the axe was out of her reach. You couldn't have known this was going to happen."

Astrid shook her head violently. "It is my fault Hiccup. I should have kept that axe way out of reach!" she sobbed. "I'm the one who almost caused our daughter to lose her hand." She sniffed loudly. "I'm her mother, I should have kept the axe locked away. This shouldn't have happened at all!" Astrid choked out as she struggled to stop the tears in her eyes from falling and failing as a couple of tears rolled down her cheeks, before spilling onto their blanket.

Hiccup reached up and wiped them away, before cupping her chin and forcing her to look at him. "Astrid, you can't blame yourself," he said. "You had no way of knowing this was going to happen, no matter what you think," he added quickly, seeing Astrid was about argue. "You are a wonderful mother," he told her lovingly, as he brushed away a few spilled tears. "As soon as you knew what happened, you got to her quickly and tended to her with no major harm done. She didn't lose her hand and all she'll get out of it is a small scar which may not be with her all her life." Hiccup smile at Astrid kindly when she looked at him attentively. "Maybe, you're right," Hiccup went on, "it shouldn't have happened, but the thing is, it did, and we can't change it. You can't be overprotective of her all her life, Astrid, she's going to get into more scrapes and you and I will be there for her when she does" Hiccup said sensibly.

Astrid's lower lip quivered before she burst into tears, flinging her arms around Hiccup as she buried her head into his chest. Wrapping his arms around his distressed wife, Hiccup pulled her into a tight embrace, stroking her hair as she cried. Hiccup knew she needed to let it all out and wasn't going to disturb her as she sobbed and just held her as tight as he was able.

"Shh, I'm right here. Just let it out," Hiccup whispered softly.

It took several minutes before Astrid finally began to calm down. Sniffing, she looked up at Hiccup and gave him a small grateful smile, which Hiccup returned as he kissed her forehead lovingly.



"You alright?" he asked her softly and Astrid nodded, keeping her arms around Hiccup's waist as she did.

"I'm alright," she sniffed, before casting her gaze up to Hiccup. "I'm sorry for snapping at you Hiccup, it's just..." She trailed off as she looked into Hiccup's eyes hesitantly. "It's just...when I saw her hand, all I could think of your leg," she choked out as she cast her eyes over Hiccup's metal leg. "It's a miracle she only just cut her hand. Hiccup, I was so scared," Astrid told him fearfully.

Hiccup kissed her forehead again. "Oh Astrid, this was nothing like what happened with my leg," he told her softly, "and it never will be if I have anything to do with it. I know you would have been scared, though. If I was there, I probably would have freaked out worse than you did." Astrid chuckled lightly. "But from what you've told me," Hiccup continued, with a small smile towards his wife, "you put your feelings aside to look after her and if that isn't being a good mother, I don't know what is," Hiccup reassured her gently as he rubbed her shoulder.

Astrid's eyes filled with tears again, but she blinked them back. She'd had enough crying for one day.

"Why is it that you always know what to say?"

Hiccup grinned at her. "Because I love you and I don't want to see my wife beat herself up over something that wasn't her fault."

Astrid blushed. "I love you too" Astrid said warmly as she leant forward and captured Hiccup's lips with her own, who responded eagerly and kissed her back contentedly, before he pulled her as close to him as he was able to manage without squashing her. After a few minutes, Hiccup pulled away with a smile at his now happier wife and caressed her cheek, allowing her to beam at him.

"I'll take the old axe to the forge tomorrow and start on a new one," Hiccup said as he nodded to the axe sitting on the table beside them. "I'm guessing you don't want to use the old one anymore?" Hiccup asked her knowingly.

Astrid nodded. "You guessed right," she said quietly, before she looked towards the door.

Seeing where her gaze was at, Hiccup touched her arm gently. "Go check on her one more time if it makes you feel better," he said and Astrid looked at him gratefully, before kissing his cheek.

"This will be the last time I promise," she assured him, before getting up and going to the room next to theirs and peeking in quietly.

Siri was curled up fast asleep, clutching her dragon doll she'd gotten from her parents on her first Snoggletog. Seeing how peaceful she looked, Astrid smiled before she tiptoed in and gave her a gentle kiss on her forehead, before stroking her blonde bangs out of her face.

As she went to leave, though, Siri awoke and looked up at her

mother.

"What is it mummy?" Siri asked sleepily and Astrid smiled apologetically at her daughter.

"Sorry sweetie, I didn't mean to wake you up," Astrid smiled. "I was just seeing if you were OK. How's your hand?"

Siri beamed. "It's OK. It's not hurting now."

"That's good," Astrid smiled, before her smile faded slightly. "I shouldn't have left the axe there, sweetie, I'm sorry," Astrid said guiltily.

Siri frowned. "It not your fault mummy. I wuv you," Siri said sweetly.

Astrid's heart melted for her little girl and she smiled lovingly at her daughter.

"I love you too sweetie. Now, go back to sleep," Astrid said as she pulled her blanket back up and kissed her forehead.

"OK," said Siri as she closed her eyes again, allowing Astrid to get up and quietly left the room. Upon entering her and Hiccup's room again, Hiccup looked up and saw the biggest smile on his wife's face.

"She OK?" Hiccup asked her and Astrid nodded with a proud smile.

"She's better than OK," she said with a proud smile. "She's braver than you think and I say if my 3 year old daughter can move past this without blaming me, then so can I!"

\* \* \*

><p><em>So was it emotional? I hope it was because that's what I was aiming for : It broke my heart to write Siri in so much pain, but as a toddler growing up in a weapon based society, I could see it happening, and I wanted to convey the consequences. For both her and Astrid, who I could imagine blaming herself for what happened, which is why I don't believe she was OOC because of the situation, because I'm sure any parent would react the same way. \_

\_Next chapter was originally planned to be a snowstorm, but is now a chapter about Siri's amazing imagination after the previous storyline went bust. This one turned out a lot better anyway :)\_

\_Once again, if you liked this chapter, PLEASE REVIEW! I worked really hard on this chapter and was kind of proud of how it worked out :) I'd like to know if you thought it was emotional or if I was right in liking a chapter of mine :) It's rare for me to think my work is good, so your reviews mean the world to me! \_

\_Remember NO FLAMES, constructive criticism only is accepted, as long as it's KIND.\_

\_Thanks for reading!\_

## 8. Chapter 8: Imagination

\_I want to thank one of my reviewers, snoopykid, for unintentionally giving me the idea for this chapter! When I was brainstorming new ideas, I remembered your review about Siri possibly wanting to know how Hiccup lost his leg, and before I knew it, I came up with this, so thankyou! :p\_

\_I also want to thank everyone who has reviewed, favoured and followed this story since I started. I am honoured that so many of you like my story and I am so grateful. I never thought anyone would like my work, so having so many people reading and reviewing has made this all worthwhile. I don't know what you all like about my stories, but I'm glad you like them :) \_

\_Enjoy the chapter! :D\_

\_\* \*\*This chapter has been edited from it's original version to improve the story quality. When it was first written, \*\*\*\*I had not been writing for very long, so the writing quality was not the best. This has now been rectified to the best of my ability without rewriting the entire chapter, so therefore there may still be some issues with the writing :) \*\*\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 8: Imagination<span>

\* \* \*

><p>It's no secret that children have very active imaginations. Whether children are playing pretend, creating their own stories based on things from their own lives or simply having imaginary friends, children are incredibly creative beings. This included Siri, who constantly amazed her parents with the lengths her mind would go in making up stories.<p>

At 4 years old, Siri had one of the most active imaginations on Berk and was always play pretending as a dragon trainer like her father or a brave warrior like her mother. She also loved to make up stories about dragons and Vikings and act them out with the village children her age; in particular four year old Lennart; sometimes in front of a small audience in the village or just with her family. Astrid believed that this was one trait she had inherited from her father was her active imagination.

Because of this both Hiccup and Astrid should have realised that there was one issue that she would have used this talent for; Hiccup's leg.

Hiccup and Astrid had never told their daughter how her daddy had come to lose his leg, thinking the time would come when they believed she would be old enough to understand. What they didn't realise was that time came a lot sooner than either of them expected or wanted. Siri had a active imagination at the best of times, but put her with four year old Lennart and it suddenly got a whole lot wilder, which it did on one particular day, six months after her fourth birthday.

\* \* \*

><p>"Lennart! Lennart, get back here right now!"<p>

Siri looked up from the book her mother was reading to her on her lap outside the house to see Anna chasing her four year old son around the village, all the while trying to hold onto her five month old son, Sigmund. Hearing the yelling, Astrid also looked up looked just as Anna stopped outside their house, looking worn out and breathless, as Lennart continued to run ahead of her.

"You alright there, Anna?" Astrid asked the young woman sympathetically. "Lennart looks like he's giving you the run around." She looked around. "Where's Snotlout?"

"Out flying with Tuff and Annika," Anna answered wearily as she watched Lennart get further and further away from her. She nodded towards his retreating figure. "Snotlout usually takes Lennart if he gets bored, but today I'm on my own. I can't keep up with both of them at the same time when he's in this mood," Anna explained with a slight sigh.

Astrid looked over at Lennart, still running around ahead of his mother. "Anna, why don't you leave Lennart with us for the day?" she suggested kindly. "I'm sure Hiccup won't mind and that way he can play with Siri. You know those two never get bored of playing Vikings and dragons," Astrid added with a chuckle and Siri's eyes lit up with this offer.

So did Anna's. "Really, you wouldn't mind?" she asked Astrid gratefully. "I wouldn't usually ask, but with Snotlout out and Lennart in this mood, you'd really be helping me out," Anna said in relief as she shifted the five month old boy in her arms.

"I don't mind Anna, really" Astrid smiled. "He's no trouble. I'll just ask Hiccup," she said with a glance towards her husband. "It's his day off, but I'm sure he won't mind." She turned to Hiccup, engrossed in a sketch he was doing while leaning up against Toothless nearby. He hadn't heard the conversation yet. Rolling her eyes with a grin, Astrid got up and went over to him, where he finally looked up at her.

"What's up Astrid?" Hiccup asked her with a smile, completely oblivious to the conversation that had just occurred.

"I know it's your day off, but you don't mind if Lennart comes over to play with Siri do you? It's just that Anna needs a break," Astrid said as she nodded towards Anna, who smiled sheepishly at the young Chief.

"It's fine with me," Hiccup said with a smile towards Anna as he stood up. "Lennart can come over whenever he wants Anna."

"Thanks Hiccup, I appreciate this," Anna said gratefully, before she turned her attention to Lennart. "Lennart!" she yelled loudly, "do you want to go over to Siri's house?!"

That got the boy's attention and he immediately stopped what he was doing and ran back to his mother, a look of excitement plastered on his face.

"That got your attention didn't it?" Anna chuckled. "Now, Hiccup and Astrid said you can play with Siri today, so you be good; promise?" Anna told him firmly.

Lennart nodded. "Yes, mummy," he said before he ran off to play with Siri.

Anna turned to Hiccup and Astrid. "If he starts acting up, just send him home. He can be a bit of a troublemaker," Anna said with a sigh, glancing over at her four year old son running around with Siri who was squealing as she tried to avoid getting caught.

"So can Siri when she wants to be," Astrid grinned. "He'll be fine, Anna. We'll drop him home before dinner."

"No, I'll get Snotlout to pick him up when he gets back," Anna said quickly. "Thanks for this Astrid," she added appreciatively as she turned to leave, just as a fine dusting of snow began to come down. Astrid waved to Anna as she hurriedly trudged through the slush on the ground, not wanting Sigmund to be exposed to the cold.

"I guess that's our cue to go inside," Hiccup said with a look at the falling snow. He turned to the kids with a smile. "Sorry kids, but it's too cold out here. You'll have to go inside and play." He ushered them towards the house where they both sighed, but went to follow Astrid inside. As Hiccup began to follow, though, Astrid's eyes suddenly widened.

"Hiccup, watch out for that--"

Hiccup's metal leg caught in a small hollow in the ground and wobbled with his weight on it, sending him sprawling; Toothless tried to catch his friend and support him, but was too slow and could only watch as he fell face first into the snowy grass.

"-hole," Astrid finished with a wince. Hiccup groaned and spat out a few blades of grass as he sat up again causing both Siri and Lennart to burst into fits of laughter and a moment later Astrid joined in, unable to help herself.

"The old metal leg strikes again it seems," Hiccup said dryly as he stood up from the ground, making Astrid just laugh harder.

"No, you just keep forgetting the hole's there, that's all!" Astrid laughed. "I've never seen anyone so accident prone in my life!"

Siri giggled too. "You're clumsy daddy!"

"Nice to know my girls have so much faith in me," Hiccup said, voice dripping sarcasm, causing Astrid and Siri to burst into fits of laughter again, as did Lennart who was looking at Hiccup's metal leg in wonder. Why did he have a metal leg anyway? He would ask Siri; she'd know.

After a moment, Astrid finally calmed down, before she gave her husband a grin. "We do have faith in you; we just know you're accident prone" Astrid said in amusement, making Hiccup groan, but grin at his wife as he gave her a tender kiss on the lips, before bending down and kissing his daughter's cheek, making her

giggle.

"I'm not that clumsy, am I sweetie?" Hiccup asked her with a chuckle.

Siri grinned at her father. "Yes, you are, daddy," she said honestly.

Hiccup shook his head. "I feel the love sweetie, thankyou," Hiccup said dryly, but he beamed and picked his daughter up, tickling her which made her squeal in fits of laughter again as he and Astrid brought her and Lennart inside from the cold flurries of snow.

"Sorry that you two have to play inside, but it's too cold outside now. Just play what you want in here, but be careful alright?" Hiccup said as he, Astrid and Toothless went to sit down by the downstairs fire while Siri and Lennart sat on her blanket on the floor.

"We will daddy," Siri said with a smile as she and Lennart began their usual game of dragons and Vikings for a moment, before Lennart looked at Hiccup and then back at Siri.

"Siri, where did your daddy's leg go?" Lennart asked his friend curiously.

Siri looked up at Lennart with a look of surprise on her face. None of the other kids had ever asked her that and she didn't know the answer either. Her daddy's metal leg was just \_there. \_It was so normal to her that she had never really thought about it, but now it got her thinking; where had her daddy's leg gone? Her parents had never told her about it and all she knew was that he had lost it long before she was born.

"I don't know," Siri admitted, "it's been like that for a long time. Mummy and daddy never told me what happened," Siri said with a frown.

"When did he lose it?" Lennart asked curiously

Siri gave a shrug. "I don't know. A long time ago, before I was born. Daddy never says why, but he always makes funny jokes about it. Like when he falls," Siri giggled, remembering the incident outside.

"Maybe it fell off!" Lennart suggested. "Can legs do that?" Lennart asked with wide eyes.

Siri eyes widened in shock at the suggestion, before she laughed. "Legs can't just fall off!" Siri giggled. "If they could, no one would have one!"

Lennart frowned in thought, well as much thought as a four year old could anyway. Then he looked around the room and spotted Toothless asleep in the corner of the room where Siri followed his gaze and knowing what he was thinking, gasped.

"Toothless didn't bite my daddy's leg off!" Siri protested. "He loves my daddy. It would have been another bad dragon," Siri said as she looked at Lennart, who frowned in annoyance.

"It wasn't my daddy's dragon! Hooky is only naughty listening to my daddy. He loves your daddy!" Lennart replied in a huff.

Siri giggled. "I was only being silly," she said. "Maybe it was a wild dragon?" she suggested. "Maybe daddy tried to save mummy and it took my daddy's leg?"

"Maybe," Lennart said with a nod. "My daddy said dragons and people use to fight so maybe a naughty dragon took your daddy's leg like they took your Uncle Gobber's," Lennart said.

"Why doesn't daddy hate dragons then? If a dragon took it, wouldn't he hate Toothless?" said Siri mystified.

"I don't know, maybe it wasn't a dragon. Maybe it was a pirate!" Lennart exclaimed dramatically.

Siri frowned. "My daddy's never mentioned a pirate," she said. "Maybe it was an accident?" Siri suggested quietly as she suddenly looked down at her left hand where there was a faint, small scar that stretched from her knuckles to the centre of the back of her hand where she had hurt herself a year ago trying to use her mother's axe.

"An accident?" Lennart asked, perplexed.

Siri showed him her scar. "I hurt myself being naughty with mummy's axe a little ago," she explained. "Mummy was very scared when I did and she kept saying about daddy's leg. Maybe he accidentally lost his leg playing around with an axe too and that's why mummy and daddy were so scared," Siri wondered sadly.

"I hurt myself on daddy's sword once, and my mummy was scared and I don't think my mummy and daddy have lost their legs," Lennart said.

Siri looked thoughtfully at her parents and nodded. "I guess so, but how did daddy lose his leg?" Siri asked Lennart before her eyes suddenly widened.

"Daddy's very clumsy, maybe he got it stuck somewhere. He always says he'll lose another one if he's not careful," Siri said with wide eyes, turning her attention to her daddy, talking to her mummy on the wooden couch in the room; her mummy's head lying on his chest.

Lennart followed her line of sight and he stuck out his tongue in disgust at the scene.

"Eww," he shuddered. "Are your mummy and daddy always like that?" Lennart asked his friend in disgust making Siri burst into fits of giggles.

"Not all the time," she giggled. "Mummy and daddy sometimes fight, but not for long. Daddy gets scared of mummy mad," Siri said with another round of giggles.

"You think your mummy could have done it?" Lennart whispered jokingly and Siri went silent for a moment, before bursting into fits of

giggles along with Lennart, falling back onto the floor laughing.

"No way!" Siri said breathlessly and Lennart grinned again just as Hiccup and Astrid looked up at the laughing pair with confused looks on their faces.

"What are you two laughing at?" Astrid asked them and the two 4 year olds looked at them with innocent grins.

"Nothing mummy," Siri told them innocently. Hiccup and Astrid looked at each other with an amused look, but let them go, keeping an ear on the conversation in the process, though.

Siri looked back at Lennart before giving him a playful punch on the arm with a grin. "That was mean Lennart, why did you say that!" Siri laughed.

Lennart winced at the contact of Siri's fist but grinned at his friend. "I was joking," he grinned. "My mummy threatens my daddy when he's being annoying," Lennart added, leaving Siri once again to try and hold back a laugh.

'Yeah, but she doesn't do anything Lennie!" Siri grinned and Lennart blushed at Siri's nickname for him, before laughing.

"Maybe a troll ate daddy's leg?" Siri said with a gasp and Lennart snorted, in a way very much like his father.

"They steal \_socks\_ Siri. Like they steal your Uncle Gobber's," Lennart stated matter-of-factly.

"Oh yeah."

"Daddy told me about nasty plants he's seen flying once. Your daddy could have had his leg eaten by a plant," Lennart said.

"Or an animal," Siri said. "Daddy use to go out in the forest a lot." Siri frowned. "A plant?" Siri questioned.

Lennart shrugged. "Maybe a plant suddenly grabbed your daddy's leg and ate it?" Lennart said, his imagination, like Siri's, now running wild. Siri gasped at the thought of her daddy losing his leg to a \_plant\_ and Lennart grinned mischievously and started to snap at Siri like that plant, before he started chasing her. Siri squealed and ran off, Lennart chasing after her, their theories forgotten in their minds for now.

They weren't forgotten in Hiccup and Astrid's minds, though. Having eavesdropped on the kid's conversation after Siri had laughed earlier, Astrid was now looking at Hiccup with a look of amusement on her face, Hiccup looking back at her with an identical expression.

"Is she...trying to guess how I lost my leg?" Hiccup asked, amazed.

Astrid nodded with an odd expression on her face. "I guess her imagination doesn't just stop with her games now," she sighed. "We should have known that she'd use it to guess what happened to your



leg," Astrid said.

Hiccup wasn't deterred though and he grinned. "I like some of them actually, they're more interesting. Especially the one where they thought it was you," Hiccup said grinning cheekily and Astrid snorted and hit him on the arm with a smile, before her face turned serious.

"Hiccup, as much as I love our daughter's imagination, I think it's time she knew the truth," she said. "She's getting curious Hiccup and we can't have her thinking like that her whole life. You lost your leg saving us and were a hero. She needs to know that about her daddy," Astrid said quietly as she lay her head back on Hiccup's chest and Hiccup sighed as he wrapped his arm around his wife's shoulders, kissing her hair softly.

'I thought we weren't going to tell her until she's ready though?" Hiccup said with a nervous edge to his voice and Astrid turned her gaze up to meet Hiccup's eyes.

"She's going to be 5 this year Hiccup and she's already guessing. I think it's time to tell her the truth. She's ready Hiccup, believe me," Astrid said gently and Hiccup sighed , but nodded in agreement with his wife.

"Alright, if you think it's for the best," Hiccup sighed. "Do you want to tell her and Lennart together now or later?"

Astrid looked at the two kids chasing each other around the room and back at Hiccup. "I think Lennart should hear it too. Siri may try to tell him later and it may get lost in translation and who knows wild \_that\_ could get," Astrid chuckled.

Hiccup laughed before he turned to the kids, now sitting down on the blanket, breathless from all the running around they just did.

"Siri, Lennart, could you two come over here?" Hiccup asked them gently and Siri and Lennart looked at each other worriedly, before getting up and going over to the couple.

"Did we do something wrong, daddy?" Siri asked her father anxiously.

Hiccup smiled reassuringly at her. "No sweetie, you didn't," he reassured her with a smile. "It's just mummy and I heard you two talking about how I lost my leg. You came up with some wild ideas there didn't you?" Hiccup asked them in amusement.

"We were just being silly daddy," Siri said quickly with quick glance at Lennart. "Lennart asked me how you lost it and I didn't know, so we tried to guess ourselves. Did we get it right?" Siri asked, her bright blue eyes wide in astonishment.

"No, not quite sweetheart, but you're right that you didn't know," Astrid said. "We weren't going to tell you until you were older, but we think it's time for you to know. If that's alright with you?" Astrid asked them gently.

Siri's eyes widened in excitement and so did Lennart's.

"Can I hear it too, Miss Astrid?" Lennart asked hopefully and Astrid smiled at the little boy.

"Yes, you can sweetie," Astrid said kindly and Siri quickly got up on her father's lap, while Astrid allowed Lennart to sit on hers.

"I'm really going to know how you lost your leg daddy?" Siri asked her father in awe.

Hiccup gave her a loving kiss on her forehead with a nod. "Mummy thinks you're ready, so we're going to tell you. Now, do you remember the stories I tell you about when we use to fight dragons?" Hiccup asked her and she and Lennart nodded solemnly. Snotlout and Anna had told their son the stories as well and it was hard to believe how much had changed in that time.

"Do you also remember the story about how your daddy beat the Red Death and brought peace between us and the dragons?" Astrid asked them as she turned to Lennart, who frowned for a moment, before his face brightened as he too remembered the story.

"Yes, you said daddy won and we became friends with the dragons," Siri nodded. "Was that when daddy lost his leg?" Siri asked, her bright blue eyes wide in shock.

"We only told you daddy won, but we didn't tell you the full story," Astrid told her gently as she looked down at the two children. "Do you remember how we said that we arrived just in time to warn everyone about the Red Death and save Toothless before your daddy fought the dragon up in the clouds?"

Siri nodded. "Daddy fought the Red Death and won," Siri recalled.

"Well, that's all we told you because you were too young," Astrid explained softly. "Now," she continued, taking a deep breath. "Your daddy did fight the Red Death in the cloud and was winning too. Toothless shot a plasma blast into the dragon's mouth..."

"...and it exploded!" Siri finished eagerly for her mother and Astrid and Hiccup smiled at their daughter. She remembered all the stories well.

"Well, the dragon exploded sweetie and I removed Toothless's tail as it was damaged," Hiccup continued. "I thought we were going to make it out of there, but the Red Death's tail hit us all of a sudden and I was knocked off Toothless into the fire from the dragon exploding. All I remember is Toothless trying to save me as I fell into the fire before I blacked out," Hiccup said quietly, his face going blank for a second as he recalled the moment.

Siri's eyes widened in shock, as did Lennart. Neither child had been told of that and they were hanging on the parents every word.

Astrid looked at Hiccup and took a deep breath before continuing the story. It may have all happened eleven years before, but this story was still difficult to tell for the young woman.

"Well, after it exploded, we all rushed to see where your daddy and

Toothless ended up," Astrid said. "We found Toothless by the explosion, his prosthetic tail fin gone and him injured and in pain, with...with your daddy nowhere in sight. We all thought that he hadn't survived the explosion," Astrid explained, her voice wavering as she spoke.

Siri and Lennart looked up at Astrid and were surprised to see her suddenly bring a hand up to her mouth trying to stifle a sob that had let its way out of her mouth, her azure eyes filling with tears as she remembered that moment. A moment she had tried so hard to forget in those years afterward. The one moment that she had let herself show her emotions in one moment in front of everyone for the first time in many years.

Hiccup took a hold of his wife's hand, and brought it up to his lips in a soft kiss, before wrapping his arm around her shoulders in comfort.

"Ssh, it's alright Astrid, I'm still here," Hiccup whispered to his wife softly. "Well, most of me is," he added with a chuckle and Astrid suddenly laughed. He always made that joke whenever they talked about this and strangely enough, it never got old. Siri looked at her mummy sadly, before moving from her daddy's lap to her mummy's and giving her a hug, while Lennart moved next to Hiccup, a little confused as to why Astrid was acting like this, but remaining silent for once in his life.

"Why are you so sad mummy? Daddy's right here," Siri asked her in confusion and Astrid chuckled.

"She knows that sweetie, it's just remembering that day is hard for her is all," Hiccup explained gently to the little girl. "I guess seeing it was pretty bad. All I know about is from what people have told me."

"So, what happened after that? Lennart interrupting them and Siri frowned at her friend.

"Lennart, my mummy is sad!" Siri exclaimed in annoyance, but Astrid stopped her.

"I'm fine Siri; Lennart just wants to know the rest. I'm alright now," Astrid smiled, before continuing.

"...Now, after we found Toothless, we didn't know where your daddy was. After awhile though, he opened his wings and revealed him. It turns out he'd caught your daddy and saved him from the flames," Astrid explained with a smile in Toothless's direction who returned it with a gummy grin. "Toothless saved his life, but there was one thing he couldn't save; his leg. Toothless had to take it to save your father..."

Siri eyes widened as she and Lennart exchanged glances. So it was Toothless! Sort of. He's had no choice Siri pointed out to herself.

"...Your daddy saved us all that day sweetheart, but he lost his leg in the process," Astrid said proudly as she gave her husband a wide smile, before kissed his cheek.

Hiccup smiled back at her. "The next thing I remember is waking up in my house, Toothless beside me a few weeks later with a metal leg," Hiccup explained. "It took some getting use too, but I'm proud of it as it reminds me of that day," Hiccup said with a smile.

Siri broke into a large grin. "Daddy, you're a hero!" Siri said joyfully, which actually made Hiccup blush bright red which made Astrid giggle.

"You were so brave sir," Lennart said in awe.

Hiccup chuckled in embarrassment. "Well, now you two know the full story. I hope it's as exciting as how you two thought I'd lost my leg," Hiccup said. "Although I admit the plant thing was pretty cool," Hiccup said with a grin, making the two 4 year olds laugh.

"Its better daddy," Siri said beaming as she gave both her parents a kiss on the cheek, before she slid off Astrid's lap and ran off with Lennart. As Hiccup and Astrid watched them, they realised the truth had given way to a new version of their Vikings and dragons game with Hiccup saving them all, but losing his leg.

"Why were we so scared of telling her the truth again?" Hiccup asked his wife in amazement as he watched the kids play their new game.

"I have no idea to be honest," Astrid said with a chuckle and Hiccup smiled at her gently, before kissing her forehead.

"You alright from earlier?" he asked her softly as he cupped her cheek. "I didn't realise that still made you feel that way."

"I didn't either," Astrid admitted with a sad sigh, "but I think it always will. I'm alright though," she added, before she grinned mischievously and hit him hard on the arm, making him wince.

"Oww, Astrid!" Hiccup rubbed his arm. "What was that for this time?"  
.

"Making me remember things I didn't want to remember," Astrid grinned.

"Actually that was Siri's doing," Hiccup pointed out.

"Well, I'm not going to blame her now though, am I?" Astrid said grinning and Hiccup rolled his eyes with a laugh.

"No you're not, milady," he admitted with a smile. "I'm sorry that I made you cry though. Why is always me that does?" Hiccup asked her, mystified.

Astrid shrugged. "Because I love you, and you make me more emotional than anyone else?" Astrid suggested, before her eyes widened at what she just said. "Where did that come from?" she exclaimed with a laugh. "I sound like I've been married for more than 6 years!"

Hiccup laughed. "That's the weirdest 'I love you' I've ever heard!" he chortled, making her blush. "Astrid, don't worry," he said to her with a warm smile. "I don't see you as weak for being upset earlier.

You're not weak, it just upsets you." He stroked her cheek softly making her smile. "Heck, you kicked my butt in combat training the other day, as you always do. You're still the best warrior out there," Hiccup said with a smile.

Astrid smiled back. "Don't you forget it either," she said with a false accusatory tone.

Hiccup put his hands up in defence. "Never will, I promise you," Hiccup said as he leant forward and met lips with Astrid's and she went to protest, but a moment later, her eyes slid shut and she kissed him back with all the passion she could manage.

"Eww mummy, you're grossing us out," Siri said with a look of disgust and Hiccup and Astrid both snorted with laughter as they broke off their interrupted kiss, looking down at the two four year olds revolted expressions.

"No more kissing in front of the kids it seems," Astrid grinned and Hiccup pretended to sigh, making Siri and Lennart laugh, before going back to their game.

They didn't get to play for long though as only a few minutes later there was a knock at the door and Lennart sighed knowing it was most likely his father coming to pick him up. He was having too much fun!

"Looks like the snow brought your daddy home early Lennart," Astrid said as she got up to answer the door where, sure enough, Snotlout was standing out the front in heavy snow. Snowflakes were attached to his hair, making it look white and he was breathing out mist. The snow must have gotten a lot worse in the previous few hours without the household noticing.

"Wow, I didn't realise the snow had gotten worse. Get in here Snotlout," Astrid ushered him in quickly.

"Thanks," he said as he quickly came in. "It's only just gotten worse, so I thought I'd better get home. Anna told me Lennart was over here. How's he been?" Snotlout asked them as he looked over at his son playing with Siri on the floor.

"He's been fine Snotlout. He and Siri have just been using their wildest imaginations, that's all," Astrid said with a grin.

Snotlout frowned. "How so?"

"It seems the kids were coming up with their own versions for how I lost my leg," Hiccup said. "Very interesting versions too, I might add." He looked over at the two giggling kids.

"I hope they didn't go too crazy," Snotlout said uneasily.

"Don't worry Snotlout, they were just joking around," Hiccup said. "But we told them the full story. I hope you don't mind," Hiccup said anxiously with a look towards his friend who shrugged undeterred, before shaking his head.

"Nah, its fine. Anna and I were going to tell him soon anyway" Snotlout said reassuringly, before he turned to his son. "What did

you think of the story Len?"

Lennart beamed at his father. "It was a lot cooler than what we thought daddy".

Snotlout chuckled and then looked at Siri. "What did you think about how your daddy lost his leg, Siri?" he asked the four year old who smiled proudly, her eyes lighting up.

"Uncle Snotlout, my daddy is a hero".

\* \* \*

><p><em>Alright, considering I came up with this at the last minute after the shelving of the original planned storyline, I hope it was alright :)<em>

\_I also apologise in the fact that I always seem to make Astrid OOC in some chapters. I do believe that she would get upset over this, but I really need to give her a break :p I promise that I will try to keep her in character from now on though.\_

\_Ok, next chapter Siri will have just turned 5, and getting what she wants at last, her own Terrible Terror! Also people have been asking me when and if Astrid will have another baby, and that answer is YES! I'm not going to tell you when as it will ruin the surprise, but I can promise you it will be very soon! :) \_

\_As always, if you liked this chapter, please review! :) NO FLAMES though, but constructive criticism is appreciated, as long as it's KIND. \_

\_Thanks for reading! :D\_

## 9. Chapter 9: First Dragon

\_Thanks again everyone for all the reviews I received last chapter, I'm getting more and more all the time and I'm so grateful, thanks everyone! :)\_

\_Now this chapter is very slow at the beginning I won't lie, I had to add in some things I'd skipped in previous chapters, but it gets better and I hope you all think so too :)\_

\_Siri gets her terrible terror in this chapter. I hope it's alright, and that you like it!\_

\_\* \*\*This chapter has been edited from it's original version to improve the story quality. When it was first written, \*\*\*\*I had not been writing for very long, so the writing quality was not the best. This has now been rectified to the best of my ability without rewriting the entire chapter, so therefore there may still be some issues with the writing :) \*\*\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 9: First Dragon<span>

\* \* \*

><p>"Daddy, wake up!"<p>

Hiccup groaned and buried his head into his pillow. Beside him, his wife followed suit as she pulled the covers over her head, both of them trying to draw out the pleas of their five year daughter. It was too early to think about getting out of bed, no matter what the occasion was.

"Daddy, get up! You promised," Siri pouted as she shook her father's shoulder. Groaning once more, Hiccup quickly followed Astrid's lead in pulling the covers up over his head.

"Whose idea of fun is to get up at sunrise?" Hiccup mumbled into his pillow.

"Apparently, your daughter's," Astrid mumbled back, not moving from her position.

Hiccup snorted. "Oh, so she's my daughter now is she?" Hiccup murmured with a quiet chuckle.

"She is when she gets us up at sunrise," Astrid said sleepily.

Siri giggled at the banter occurring between her parents. She knew how early it was, but she was too excited to go back to bed. She was getting her own Terrible Terror today! The little girl had turned five the day before, and as promised by her parents, today she would be allowed to finally get a dragon of her own and boy was she excited! Now she just hoped she could get her parents out of bed.

"Daddy, get up," Siri pleaded with her father making Hiccup sigh as he turned to face his daughter.

"Siri, it's early. Don't you want to go back to bed for awhile?" Hiccup asked her hopefully and Siri shook her head before giving her dad a pouting look.

Hiccup and Astrid sighed. Siri wasn't going to go back to sleep and the parents knew it; it looks like they were getting up at sunrise.

"Alright, we'll go early," Astrid said to Siri's delight. But we're having breakfast first though, alright?" Astrid added with a firm glance towards the little girl.

Siri nodded. "Alright mummy," Siri agreed excitedly as Hiccup and Astrid dragged themselves out of bed. From his bed in the corner of the room, Toothless yawned widely as he slowly got up too. He also knew that going back to sleep was out of the question, especially when Siri was so excited.

"We'll just get changed sweetie, why don't you and Toothless go downstairs?" Astrid suggested as she grabbed her clothes and Siri looked at her mother with a worried expression.

Knowing what she was thinking, Astrid laughed. "We won't go back to sleep Siri, I promise." Satisfied, Siri beamed before she followed the Night Fury downstairs.

Hiccup gave Astrid an amused look. "Why did you promise that? I was going to sneak back to bed..." Hiccup said with a grin.

Astrid snorted. "You're the one who promised her we'd go early," Astrid pointed out with a grin. "You've got no one to blame, but yourself."

"Remind me not to promise that again," Hiccup told her with a groan as the two of them finally joined their daughter downstairs, who was excitedly bouncing around in her chair at the table. It was hard to believe she could get so excited over getting her first dragon!

"Don't get too excited Siri, we're not leaving for awhile yet," Hiccup said as he fumbled around trying to make breakfast while still half asleep causing Siri to cross her arms impatiently.

"Siri, don't be like that," Astrid warned her firmly. "I doubt Lennart would even be up, let alone anyone else, so just be patient." Siri sighed, but stopped pouting. She knew it wouldn't get her anywhere.

"So, what Terrible Terror are you going to get sweetie?" Hiccup asked his little girl as he put a plate down in front of her.

She looked at her father thoughtfully. "I thought you were choosing one for me?" Siri asked, bewildered.

"We got 6 Terrors for you to choose from, but you get the final pick," Hiccup explained with a smile. "Uncle Fishlegs spent weeks studying them to choose ones with the right temperament for you." Understanding, Siri's eyes lit up.

Astrid chuckled. "And\_ that's\_ why we have to wait until the others are up, Siri," she told her.

Siri frowned. "That might be \_ages,\_ though!" Siri droned, making Hiccup and Astrid laugh and Toothless gave out a low version of a chuckle.

"I asked you if you wanted to go back to bed," Hiccup said grinning and Siri gave him an amused look before Hiccup suddenly tickled her making her scream before laughing.

Astrid frowned and gave Hiccup an irritated look. "Hiccup, she's eating," Astrid said sternly and Hiccup sighed, but stopped what he was doing to allow Siri to continue eating, before going back to his own breakfast. A knock on the door interrupted the peaceful breakfast.

"OK, we were wrong, somebody \_is \_up," Astrid said, surprised, as she got up and opened the door to find Lennart with a look of excitement on his face to match Siri's.

"Hey Lennart; you here to come with us?" Astrid asked him kindly.

He nodded eagerly. "I'm going to help Siri pick her dragon!" Lennart exclaimed excitedly as Snotlout and Anna came running up to him, out of breath.



"I'm sorry Astrid," Anna said breathlessly as she came to a stop. "I told him to wait, but he ran out as soon as he was finished eating!"

"He didn't get us up, don't worry. Siri already did that," Astrid said with a laugh.

Anna sighed with relief before turning to her son. "Don't run off when we tell you not to. They could have still been in bed," Anna said firmly to her son. "Do you understand?"

Lennart sighed, but nodded to his mother. "Yes mummy."

"I wish \_I \_was still in bed," Snotlout mumbled, and Hiccup chuckled. He never thought he'd agree with Snotlout, but this time he couldn't have said a truer statement.

"Well seeing as we're all up, we might as well get going," Astrid said. "If that's alright with the kids of course," Astrid added with a grin towards Siri and Lennart, who both nodded eagerly.

"I thought so, come on then," Astrid said. "If no one else is there, we'll wait".

Siri and Lennart both raced to their parent's respective dragons; Siri going on Toothless with Hiccup and Lennart with Snotlout on Hookfang. Considering how early it was, walking wasn't an option. Besides, both kids never passed up a chance to be on dragons, no matter how short or long the distance.

\* \* \*

><p>When they reached the academy, though, they found they were the only ones there; just like Astrid had suspected. Both Siri and Lennart grumbled at this knowledge, but went off to play with Toothless and Hookfang while they waited. Hookfang may never listen to his rider, but no matter what Lennart asked of him, he would always do it. Anna always joked it was because Lennart wasn't old enough to be as annoying as his father; something that Snotlout constantly tried to deny, but usually lost against his genuinely shy wife.<p>

The group didn't have to wait around for long for the others to arrive, though. No sooner had they sat down to wait, they heard the rapid fluttering of Meatlug's wings as Fishlegs and Ruffnut arrived with a large box.

"I knew you'd get here before us. Siri was excited enough about this yesterday," Fishlegs smiled as he got off the Gronkle and placed the box on the ground, before turning back to help a heavily pregnant Ruffnut off Meatlug's back. Once her feet touched the ground, Ruffnut groaned and stretched her back.

"Oh Thor, that's uncomfortable," Ruffnut groaned as she waddled her 7 month pregnant belly over the group.

"Ruff, aren't you grounded from flying now?" Astrid asked her, raising her eyebrows at the young woman.

"If you think I was walking all the way here as big as this, you've got another thing coming," Ruffnut replied in irritation.

"It's only Meatlug, Astrid, I wouldn't put Ruff in danger," Fishlegs said gently and Ruffnut smiled gratefully at Fishlegs, before going to lean up against the wall of the academy, not wanting to risk sitting down being unable to get back up.

Siri looked at her parents impatiently. "Mummy, can I pick my dragon now?" she asked.

"Are Tuff and Annika coming?" Hiccup asked Fishlegs, who placed the box of Terrible Terrors in front of the two kids, who peered into it excitedly.

"They're supposed to be, but if they don't get here soon, I'd just let Siri go," Fishlegs said with a grin towards the anxious five year old who was hopping up and down on the spot in excitement.

"Don't worry Siri, we're here," Annika said as she suddenly came walking into the academy, a drowsy looking Tuffnut by her side.

"Woah, what's up with Tuffnut?" Hiccup asked with a laugh at the drowsy Viking.

"He had to get up early, and then walk here. Naturally he's exhausted," Annika said sarcastically as she rolled her eyes at her lethargic husband.

"How in Thor's name did you walk here?!" Ruffnut exclaimed in disbelief. "You're pregnant too!"

"That's what I said," Tuffnut said with a yawn.

Annika rolled her eyes, but smiled. "I'm 3 months pregnant and I can still beat you here. What does that say?" Annika asked her husband.

Tuffnut frowned. "Um, that I don't like walking?" he suggested. "I don't know, quit pressuring me!" Tuffnut exclaimed.

"Argh yes, can't do that this early in the morning now can we?" Annika mocked, which made Tuffnut look more confused than usual as the rest of the group burst into fits of laughter. You could always rely on Annika for a laugh. It was sometimes hard to believe those two worked so well!

"Are we allowed to pick one?" Lennart asked, baffled as to why the grown-ups were now all talking and ignoring them. Siri looked at Lennart with a shrug before calling out to get the attention off her parents

"Mummy, daddy, can I choose?" Siri asked them hopefully and Hiccup and Astrid grinned guiltily at their daughter. They had forgotten for a moment what they were here for.

"Sorry sweetie, go right ahead," Hiccup said as he went over to the box and lifted the lid on it to reveal six different coloured Terrible Terrors, who all glanced up at the Vikings in curiosity. One

even sniffed at Siri inquisitively as soon as it looked at her, making her giggle.

"There are 4 girls, and 2 boys in this box Siri," Fishlegs said, pointing them out to her and Lennart. "The dark green and yellow ones are boys."

Toothless growled at the tiny dragons as they came out of the box and began sniffing at the two kids. He detested the little pests and no matter how much Fishlegs and Hiccup had studied them for their temperament, he still didn't trust them around the little girl and her friend.

Hiccup knew where Toothless's thoughts were at and chuckled. "They won't hurt her bud, I promise," he reassured the dragon.

Toothless and Stormfly still didn't look convinced and they both continued to eye the little dragons off. As Toothless growled at one of the little dragons for getting too close, Siri looked up at him and giggled.

"Stay with me Toothless," Siri said with a grin and Toothless immediately went over to her, standing guard over them to make sure the Terrible Terrors didn't do anything they shouldn't.

"Take your time sweetie. Remember, you're choosing a companion, not a pet. You have to like them and they have to like you back," Hiccup reminded her gently as Siri sat down among the little group of them in order to play with them better. Lennart sat beside her also playing with them excitedly.

"Don't get any ideas kiddo, you're not five yet!" Snotlout quickly exclaimed as he noticed how attached Lennart was getting to them.

"I know, daddy," Lennart said.

"Looks like she'll be awhile in choosing," Anna said with a smile towards Hiccup and Astrid.

"I'm sitting down then" Ruffnut said as she gently slid down the wall onto the ground. "Someone may need to help me up later though," she added with a slight groan.

Astrid chuckled. "I remember that all too well Ruff, don't worry."

"So do I," Hiccup said. "I also remember when you got stuck in bed one day near your due date because I wasn't home so you stayed in bed until midday," Hiccup added with a large grin on his face as he looked over towards her.

With a deep blush, Astrid hit him hard on the shoulder. "You promised never to mention that!" she yelled, her face turning redder by the second. Hiccup burst into fits of laughter with everyone else and Astrid just hid her face in her hand, her face bright red.

"That happened to me just yesterday," Ruffnut shrugged. "It's not that embarrassing."

Tuffnut snorted. "Wish I could have been there to see that!" Tuffnut

sniggered at his sister, who gave him a death glare enough to rival Thor himself.

"Or maybe I don't," Tuffnut gulped.

Annika rolled her eyes. "Nice save there, Tuff," she said as Fishlegs nodded in agreement. He had been married to Ruffnut for 5 years and knew not to make her angry, especially now. Tuffnut had known her his whole life and still didn't!

Astrid turned to see how Siri was going and found she was still in the process of choosing a dragon, before turning back to the others. Anna chuckled at the fact that the kids were still trying to choose half an hour later, as did Astrid.

"Hard choice for a 5 year old," Astrid noted in amusement as she watched the two children play with the little creatures.

"Speaking of which; when are you and Hiccup going to give Siri a brother or sister?" Anna asked the two of them curiously. "I thought I heard you talking about it a few months ago."

Hiccup and Astrid looked at each other with a sly grin making Anna raise her eyebrows.

"Are you two already expecting?!" Anna exclaimed excitedly as she flicked her eyes to Astrid's flat stomach.

"No, no, we're not!" Hiccup said quickly. "Not yet anyway," he added with a smile at Astrid.

Astrid smiled back. "We've been trying for a few months, just no luck yet," she explained to the group. "You'll be the first to know when it happens though, I promise."

"Wouldn't I be the first to know?" Hiccup asked her teasingly and Astrid rolled her eyes, lightly punching his shoulder, before giving him a gentle kiss on the lips.

"After you of course, yes. You really think I'd tell you last?" Astrid asked her husband humorously.

Hiccup shook his head with a grin. "I was just kidding Astrid," he said. "I was the first you told when you found out about Siri and I'll never forget it," Hiccup said softly as he kissed his wife's forehead and she beamed at him happily, before they were interrupted.

"Mummy, I chose my dragon!" Siri yelled out in excitement.

Hiccup and the others turned their attention to the little girl who was holding a very cute purple Terrible Terror who was snuggled up in her arms, looking quite content. Toothless and Stormfly, despite their earlier reservations, were looking quite relaxed at the prospect of Siri holding a Terrible Terror, much to Hiccup and Astrid's relief.

"Nice choice Siri. She's the quietest of the bunch," Hiccup said proudly.

"She's also the most affectionate," Fishlegs added as Hiccup and Astrid went over to inspect the little dragon.

"Are you sure that's the dragon you want Siri?" Hiccup asked her gently and she confidently nodded.

"Then she's yours sweetheart," Hiccup smiled. "But you have to give her a name," he added quickly seeing Siri's eyes light up. "To establish a bond, you have to make sure she has a name," Hiccup said as he patted the little dragon, which began to purr like a cat, making him and Astrid laugh.

Siri looked at Lennart. "What do you think we should name her?"

"Why are you asking Lennart?" Astrid asked in confusion.

Siri looked at her mother like it was the most obvious thing in the world. "Because we're gonna share her until Lennie can get his own," said Siri and Lennart nodded in agreement.

"Great, I have to deal with one of those things already," Snotlout mumbled in undertone which made Anna look at him in amusement.

"It's not like he'll be living with us Snotlout, don't worry so much," she said as she kissed his cheek gently and he mumbled, but smiled at his wife. He hated Terrible Terrors; the little buggers annoyed him to no end, as they did the dragons. He was\_ not\_ looking forward to the day Lennart got one of his own.

"Well alright then, what are you \_two \_going to name her?" Astrid asked.

Siri and Lennart looked at each other thoughtfully, before they both beamed widely.

"Midnight!" they exclaimed in unison.

Astrid looked at them, then to Hiccup, bewildered. "What type of name is that for a purple dragon?"

Hiccup chuckled. "Let them go Astrid. It's not like all dragons are named properly anyway," he said with a grin towards Toothless, who gave his rider a gummy smile.

"Good point," Astrid chuckled. "Midnight it is, sweetie." Looking at the little dragon, though, she frowned. "No really," she said with a shake of her head, "I need to know. Why Midnight?"

Siri and Lennart laughed. "It can look purple at night mummy and the name is cool. Isn't it Lennart?" Siri asked her friend, who nodded in agreement.

"Cool," Lennart grinned.

Astrid looked at Hiccup in surprise, but said nothing against the name after that logic.

"Alright, you want to start some training then?" Hiccup asked the two children, who both nodded eagerly.

"What do you want Midnight to do?" Astrid asked them.

"Shoot a fire ball at things like Toothless can do," Siri answered enthusiastically.

"Fly through hoops!" exclaimed Lennart with a grin.

"Find things we can't!"

"Tell when danger's coming!"

"Hide when told!"

Hiccup put his hands up quickly to stop the kids. "Woah, slow down. That will all come later on, I promise. I think we need to start with something easy and simple today, though," Hiccup said patiently.

"Awww," Siri and Lennart whined.

"I'm sorry sweetie, but they are too hard for a 5 year old to do. I think we should start with easier things," Hiccup said gently as he kissed his daughters head and she sighed, but smiled at her father.

"Why don't they start with getting the terror to respond to them," Astrid suggested.

"Precisely what I was thinking," Hiccup said in agreement.

"That sounds \_boring\_" whined Lennart.

"Lennart!" Anna exclaimed. "You won't be sharing Midnight if you act like that," Anna warned and Lennart looked at his parents' stern faces and looked at Hiccup with an apologetic look on his face.

"I'm sorry, sir," Lennart said sheepishly.

Hiccup patted the boy's shoulder with an understanding smile. "It's alright Len, I know it's boring. It will come in handy, though, trust me," Hiccup explained to the four year old patiently and Lennart nodded as Hiccup turned to face his daughter.

"Alright, first of all, we need to get Midnight to respond to you," Hiccup said. "That way she will come to you when you want her. A terror has to learn their name," Hiccup added thoughtfully as he watched as the tiny dragon crawled out of Siri's arms and onto her shoulder, nuzzling her head. Toothless watched on protectively, but didn't make a move to stop her from sitting there.

"Remember not to treat her like a pet though, Siri," Hiccup continued as he watched Siri pat the dragons head. "Dragons are amazing creatures, and they need to be treated with care." .

"I know daddy" Siri said seriously as she picked up the dragon and placed her on the ground in front of her, waiting for her daddy's instructions.

"Alright, look directly at her and make sure she's looking at you," Hiccup instructed her and Siri nodded, doing what her father

asked.

"Lennart, you should be paying attention too," Snotlout said firmly as he noticed the little boy's attention was elsewhere.

"He's only four, 'Lout. He'll pick it up," Hiccup said positively, before turning his attention back to his daughter.

"Alright, look directly at her and speak her name slowly and clearly."

Siri continued to keep her eye on the Terrible Terror, before speaking, "Midnight".

The dragon looked at her curiously, but didn't react. Siri looked at her daddy, a little unsure, but was surprised to see him still smiling.

"She wouldn't have gotten it straight away sweetie, no matter how smart they are," he said. "At least she's still looking at you," Hiccup reassured her encouragingly and Siri grinned and looked at her again, saying her name once more. Once again, there was no major response.

"Keep saying it until you get a reaction. She'll soon realise that's meant to be her name," Hiccup smiled and Siri continued to say Midnight's name, before finally after awhile, the little dragon finally gave a little squawk and fly up on Siri's shoulder and nuzzled her.

"She knows her name daddy!" Siri yelled in excitement.

"Good job Siri!" Hiccup exclaimed proudly. "Now, I want you to keep practicing on that for awhile. Midnight might easily forget that's her name, so you need to work on it," Hiccup said. "You too, Lennart," he added, as he noticed the little boy paying no attention at all. Looked up guiltily, Lennart got up and went over to join Siri in the name lesson.

Hiccup went over to join Astrid as they watched the inquisitive five year old teach the Terror her new name and Astrid beamed proudly at her daughter and at her husband, before giving him a kiss on the cheek.

"Good job teaching her, Hiccup. She's going to be a natural," Astrid said happily as she watched them.

"I think so, too," Hiccup beamed.

\* \* \*

><p>Siri and Lennart continued with the name lesson until afternoon, surprising everyone with how focused they were. Those two got bored easily most of the time, so having their attention on something for this amount of time was an amazing achievement. They were at it so long that Tuffnut, Annika, Ruffnut and Fishlegs had gone home already, leaving the others to their training.<p>

Before long though, even Siri and Lennart were over it.

"Daddy, I'm bored. Can we go home?" Siri said after as noon came and went.

"I think we can sweetie. I think Midnight knows her name now anyway," Hiccup said, pride evident in his voice as he bent down in front of his daughter and smiled at her. "You did a very good job sweetheart, I'm proud of you."

Siri beamed at her daddy as he enveloped her in his arms into a loving embrace and kissed her forehead.

"Thanks daddy," Siri said happily and Hiccup smiled at her, before taking Midnight off her gently.

"I'll take her until we get home. I don't think you'll be able to hold onto her and Toothless at the same time, will you?" Hiccup said and she shook her head as Astrid went over to her daughter, taking her into her arms as well.

"You're a natural, my little dragon trainer, I'm so proud of you," Astrid said with a wide smile, as she kissed her little girl on the cheek.

"Thanks mummy," Siri beamed as her eyes lit up, hugging her mother back.

Lennart went over to his parents as they also prepared to leave, excitement still on his face from training Midnight.

"I can't wait to get my own Terror mummy!" Lennart said eagerly and Anna laughed.

"Can't you now?" Anna asked her son in amusement as she passed eleven month old Sigmund to Snotlout so she could take her son's hand.

"Nope," Lennart answered with a wide grin. "And do you know what I want to teach mine to do?"

"What's that buddy?" Snotlout asked the four year old, amused.

"Teach it to sing!" Lennart exclaimed excitedly, making Snotlout suddenly blanch and swallow nervously.

"Oh no you're not!".

\* \* \*

><p><em>I'm sure everyone remembers the bad experience Snotlout has had with Terrible Terrors in the series, especially in Defenders of Berk, in particular the episode 'Fright of Passage' near the end, so I wanted to make a joke out of how much he hates them :p I also know Midnight is a weird name for a purple Terrible Terror, but you have no idea how stuck I was with it. I might change the name later on if I think of something better.<em>

\_Ok, I'm sure many of you noticed the foreshadowing I had within the chapter as to a new family member, so no surprises what the next chapter will be about :) I'm really looking forward to it too!\_



\_If you liked this chapter, don't forget to review! :D Remember once again though, NO FLAMES, but constructive criticism is accepted as long as it's KIND.\_

\_Thanks for reading! \_

## 10. Chapter 10: Surprise News

\_I'm sure you can all tell by the name of the chapter, that this is chapter you've all been waiting for! :) I hope you enjoy it!\_

\_By the way, thank you again everyone for your support on this story. I have now reached 56 follows and getting an average of 10 reviews per chapter. Honestly, I have no clue as to why you like this so much, but I'm stoked at the attention it's getting! \_

\_I apologise for the beginning of this chapter too, as it's a little gross, but considering the circumstance I'm sure you can all forgive me :p This chapter may seem like it's everywhere too, but I promise you it's not. The importance of the middle part is just a little subtle, is all.\_

\_Anyway, enjoy the chapter! :D\_

\_\* \*\*This chapter has been edited from it's original version to improve the story quality. When it was first written, \*\*\*\*I had not been writing for very long, so the writing quality was not the best. This has now been rectified to the best of my ability without rewriting the entire chapter, so therefore there may still be some issues with the writing :) \*\*\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 10: Surprise News<span>

\* \* \*

><p>Astrid awoke suddenly. For a moment, she didn't know what that had awoken her, but then she felt it; a wave of nausea making her stomach churn dangerously. Clapping a hand over her mouth, she quickly reached for a bucket beside the bed used for emergency purposes and emptied the contents of her stomach into it with a miserable groan before lying back onto the pillows with a disgusted moan.<p>

The sound of his wife retching awoke Hiccup and he winced as he watched her place down the bucket, before laying back down with a groan. Anxiously sitting up, Hiccup felt her forehead and was perplexed to find her head sweaty, but otherwise cool.

"Are you alright, Astrid?" Hiccup asked her worriedly. "You're as white as the snow, and you're sweating. Do you want me to get a healer?"

"I just threw up, Hiccup, of course I look like that," Astrid irritably replied as she sat up again, feeling another wave of nausea hit her which made her quickly grab the bucket again. Wincing again, Hiccup pulled her loose hair back out of her face as she moaned and

placed the bucket back on the floor, before making a move to stand up.

"Oh no you're not, I'll take that. You stay in bed," Hiccup said firmly as he stood up and collected the bucket, ignoring his own disgust to get rid of it in the process.

"Hiccup, I can do it myself," Astrid said stubbornly. "It's just a bit of food poisoning."

"Astrid, you just threw up twice in a few minutes, you are not fine!" Hiccup exclaimed, worriedly. "You don't even know its food poisoning!"

"Hiccup, I was sick after eating last night too and now I'm sick this morning. Figure it out for yourself" Astrid said, exasperated.

"Actually you just felt sick," Hiccup pointed out, making Astrid roll her eyes in annoyance.

"I was still sick though, wasn't I?" Astrid retorted angrily, and Hiccup sighed and went to empty out the bucket. Revolted at the sight, Toothless followed him out of the room and didn't return with Hiccup a few minutes later. He'd refused to be in the same room with a sick person since the whole incident with Siri five years before.

Returning to the room, Hiccup saw Astrid was once again on the verge of being sick again, and rushed over to help just in time.

"That's it, Astrid, you're going to a healer," Hiccup said, once it was all over.

Astrid sighed. "Hiccup, I'll be fine," she said as she lay back down.

"Astrid, you look awful. I'll lose you in the snow with the way you look right now," Hiccup said anxiously.

Astrid snorted at the comment. "Thanks for that Hiccup, I feel so much better now," Astrid said sarcastically.

Hiccup sighed. "Astrid I mean it. I'm taking you to the healer," Hiccup said anxiously as he tucked a strand of her hair behind Astrid's ear. "You're not well."

"But you have plans with Siri!" Astrid protested. "She was looking forward to it."

Hiccup frowned thoughtfully. "If you agree to let me take you to the healers, I'll go with Siri, deal?" He looked at Astrid hopefully.

Astrid sighed, but nodded. "Fine, you win," Astrid said in defeat as she slowly got up.

"I'll go and get Siri up then," Hiccup said gently as he kissed Astrid's forehead and she gave him a grateful smile as he left the room. As much as she hated to admit it, she was sort of glad for the

push to the healers. Being sick wasn't her idea of fun.

Upon reaching Siri's room, Hiccup knocked on the door which was already ajar, suggesting Toothless had escaped there after Astrid was sick. Within seconds, Siri opened it with a wide smile, Toothless napping soundly behind her.

"Are we leaving, daddy?" Siri asked him excitedly as soon as she saw him.

"Soon sweetie," Hiccup assured her, "but we have to take mummy to the healer first. She isn't feeling very well," Hiccup said softly making Siri look up at her father in alarm.

"Is she OK?" she asked worriedly.

Hiccup gave her a reassuring smile. "She's just a little sick sweetie, don't worry," Hiccup reassured her lightly. "She's just too stubborn to go to the healer on her own, that's all," Hiccup said with a light chuckle. Siri giggled. That was very much like her mummy. She looked over at Toothless.

"Is that why Toothless is here?" Siri asked, her eyes still focussed on the Night Fury, still curled up beside her bed in a doze, Midnight right above him at the end of the girl's bed, also asleep.

Hiccup chuckled at close proximity between the two dragons. Toothless may have tolerated the little dragon in the house, but he still didn't like her. Obviously disgust outweighed intolerance in this instance.

"I guess so sweetie," Hiccup said with a light chuckle as the Night Fury lifted his head and gave his friend a smile, which Hiccup returned, before turning his attention back to his daughter.

"So, are you ready to go?" Hiccup asked her, and she nodded.

"Alright, I'll go get mummy and we'll meet you outside, OK?" Hiccup said, and Siri nodded again with a smile, before Hiccup returned to his and Astrid's room.

When he entered the room, he saw Astrid was fully dressed, but awfully pale as she sat on the bed with a hand to her head. In the seven years Hiccup had been married to Astrid, he had only ever seen her looking this bad once, and if she was feeling as bad as she had then, it was going to be a long day.

"You ready to go?" Hiccup asked her gently, and Astrid looked up at him with a sigh, before standing up, looking completely worn out, almost as if she hadn't slept in days.

"Siri's waiting outside with Toothless," Hiccup explained as he approached to his wife. "We'll walk you to the healer's house and make sure you stay there before we go out," Hiccup said resolutely as he placed an arm around her shoulders and pressed his lips against her hair gently.

"No complaints here. I feel like I've had a night in the Great Hall," Astrid groaned against Hiccup's shoulder.

Hiccup gave her a sympathetic chuckle. If Astrid was comparing this to something like that, she must be feeling something awful. The only time Astrid and Hiccup had ever been so hung-over, or that ill, was at the conclusion of their three day wedding celebration seven years before. If Astrid really was feeling like that, Hiccup was glad she had agreed to go to the healer. Neither of them had ever forgotten how sick they had gotten that time, although they had certainly tried too!

"If that's the case, at least I'll know you'll stay at the healers for once," Hiccup grinned, which Astrid couldn't help but return as she and Hiccup went outside to meet up with Siri and Toothless. Upon noticing how pale Astrid was, they both gave her a sympathetic look.

"You look terrible mummy," Siri noted, with a hint of worry in her voice.

Astrid gave a light chuckle at her daughter's honesty. "I feel it too sweetie, don't worry," Astrid assured her, as Hiccup looked around and noticed there was one less dragon there than there should have been.

"Siri, where's Midnight?"

"In my room daddy, she didn't want to move," Siri replied with a shrug.

"Do you want to try calling her? Maybe she'll come now that you're leaving?" Hiccup suggested.

"Ok," Siri agreed, before she went to the back end of the house and called up to the open latch window that was her room. "Midnight, you wanna come with me and daddy?!"

They watched as Midnight jumped up on the latch and looked down at her friend. For a moment, it looked as if she was going to come, before she suddenly gave a big yawn before jumping back out of sight. That was obviously a big fat no to coming with them.

"Obviously not then," Hiccup chuckled.

"Hiccup!" Astrid said quickly, and Hiccup and Siri turned around just in time to see Astrid heave once more into the bushes, making them both wince. They were wasting time with Midnight and here Astrid was still as sick as she was earlier.

"I'm sorry, Astrid, we're wasting time," Hiccup said guiltily as he wrapped an arm around her shoulders. "Come on, we'll get you to the healer."

"I thought it was passing, but now I feel worse," Astrid said irritably as she let Hiccup lead her to the healer's house without much complaint. Whatever this was wasn't letting up, and Astrid had had just about enough of it. Siri ran up to her mother as they went along and took a hold of her hand lovingly, making Astrid smile fondly at her daughter. She always held her little girls hand when she was sick and now it looks as if she wanted to return the favour, and once they reached the healers house, it was Siri who knocked on

the door.

When the healer, named Lagatha, opened the door, her eyes widened as they fell upon the pale face that was Astrid. She knew it was rare for the young woman to come and see her, no matter how ill she got, so she must have been quite ill to come of her own choice.

"Gods, you're pale, dear. What's wrong?" Lagatha asked professionally.

"I woke up needing to be sick and I haven't stopped since," Astrid replied with a groan.

Hiccup nodded in agreement. "She felt sick last night too, but it didn't really start until this morning," Hiccup added with a quick glance towards his wife.

"How do you feel?" Lagatha inquired curiously, her eyes on Astrid's pale face.

"Like I've spent a night in the Great Hall," Astrid dryly replied, and Lagatha couldn't help but chuckle at that. She too remembered the week Astrid had had after her wedding celebrations, so she knew exactly what she was dealing with in terms of how sick she was.

"No wonder you came to me, then," Lagatha chuckled, despite herself. "Come on, let's see what's going on," she said and Astrid nodded, before Hiccup looked at Lagatha with a grin.

"Try and stop her if she tries to run away, Lagatha," Hiccup joked, as he helped Astrid inside the house.

Lagatha laughed. "Don't worry, Hiccup, I'll make sure she stays," Lagatha told him gently, and Hiccup smiled gratefully at her before giving Astrid a kiss on the cheek.

"I'll see you this afternoon," Hiccup said warmly. "Do me a favour, though, and please rest up today? Whatever you have isn't going to go away being stubborn. Please, Astrid?" Hiccup pleaded, making Astrid sigh, but smile at him.

"I promise," Astrid said sincerely. "Have a good day with Siri."

"I will," Hiccup said with a smile towards her, before he turned his attention to Lagatha. "Thanks for this, Lagatha. I just hope it's nothing too serious," Hiccup said nervously, and Lagatha gave him a smile as he turned to leave.

"Oh I don't think it is Hiccup, but I'll check to make sure. You'll find out later, either way," Lagatha said with a sly grin.

Hiccup frowned and was about to ask what she meant, but she closed the door on him. He thought about going back in to ask, before he heard Siri calling out to him nearby.

"Daddy, Auntie Ruffnut is having her baby!" Siri yelled in excitement as she ran up to him, her eyes alight with anticipation.

Hiccup momentarily forgot Lagatha's words as he heard this news and he grinned as wide as his daughter. It was about time, too. Poor

Ruffnut had been nearly two weeks overdue and had been letting everyone know about it as well.

"Who did you hear that from, sweetie?" Hiccup asked the little girl with a smile.

"Aunty Annika just told me," Siri said with a grin. "Can we stay and see the baby, daddy?" Siri asked her daddy eagerly, and Hiccup chuckled. He highly doubted the young woman would be so lucky to have a labour that quick. They would find out later on.

"You'd be waiting all day sweetie, babies don't come that fast," Hiccup said. "Unless, you want to wait around all day and not go to the cove," Hiccup added with a mischievous grin towards his little girl, who's eyes widened in horror at the thought.

Hiccup laughed. "I didn't think you did. Come on, let's get going."

\* \* \*

><p>The cove that day was beautiful. It had snowed the night before, and there was a thin layer of fresh snow covering the ground and on the trees, making them glisten and sparkle like magic. There was a slight chill in the air from the previous night's snow, but the day was sunny, and the sun was just warm enough in order to enjoy this beautiful sight.<p>

"It's so pretty!" Siri exclaimed in awe as she slid off Toothless's back onto the snow covered ground, looking around at the wonder around her. She had never been to the cove at this time of the year and it was the most beautiful sight the little girl had ever seen in her life.

Hiccup smiled at the wonder in the little girl's eyes, and took out his sketchbook from his satchel. He also had never seen the cove like this, covered in snow and glistening as it was, and was as amazed as his 5 year old daughter.

"It is pretty, isn't it?" Hiccup said with a glance around the snow covered area. "Why don't you go off and have a look around, then?" Hiccup suggested as he sat on a small patch of exposed grass, opening his sketchbook to capture the beauty of the place in all its snow covered wonder.

"Ok!" Siri said as she ran off, Toothless following her for a short distance, before finding a small patch of snow, thinner than the rest and plopping himself down and rolling around in the snow.

Hiccup chuckled at the Night Fury's antics and began to sketch him, not noticing that Siri had stopped and looked back at Toothless with a mischievous smile on her face.

Gathering a small pile of snow in her hands, the girl looked back at Toothless, who was taking no notice of her, and tongue out in concentration, launched the snowball right at the dragons head.

Toothless started and looked around for the source of the projectile, and noticed the 5 year old innocently looking away, trying not to

giggle, but failing miserably. Hiccup also looked up at the sound of the snowball hitting something, and burst in to fits of laughter noticing the snow covering the Night Fury's head, resulting in Toothless giving his rider an irritated look, before looking back towards an innocent looking Siri.

"Are you going to let her get away with that bud?!" Hiccup yelled to his friend with a grin, and Toothless looked back towards a giggling Siri, before he scooped up a pile of snow with his tail, and launched it back towards the little girl, hitting her square in the stomach with a low grumble of a laugh.

Siri squealed with laughter and hit back at Toothless with yet another snowball, and before long, it became an all out snowball war between girl and dragon. Hiccup watched on, not being able to stop laughing at the antics of the two most important people in his life, all the while trying to sketch the moment. Hiccup had filled over 3 books with sketches since Siri was born and this was most certainly going to continue as she grew older, especially if he and Astrid ever had any more kids. Valka always said that Hiccup was the proudest father on Berk and he couldn't have been proud of that title. Siri was his whole world, and even if he and Astrid ended up not having any more children, he didn't care, as long as he had this special little girl in his life, he was the proudest husband and father on Berk.

"Daddy, help!"

Hiccup snapped out of his reverie and looked up from his sketchbook to see Siri was losing the snowball fight. Toothless was throwing snowball after snowball at her with his tail with an excited look on his face, and Siri was squealing and running away from the dragon in an effort to avoid them. She couldn't even make snowballs herself without getting hit by a dozen of them at once!

Hiccup laughed. "You should never go against a Night Fury, sweetie, and I guess that goes for snowball fights as well!" Hiccup chuckled as Siri once again ducked an incoming snowball, Toothless giving a cheeky grin at her.

Siri looked at her daddy with a pout. "Daddy, help me! Toothless is gonna win!" Siri pleaded with him as Toothless once again hit her with a snowball. Hiccup gave his daughter a grin, before scooping up a handful of snow himself and throwing it unexpectedly at Toothless, hitting him on the back of the head.

Toothless looked at his rider in surprise, before he gave him a gummy smile and scooped up more snow in his tail, before launching it towards him.

"Daddy, look out!" Siri yelled quickly, and Hiccup stepped away just in time to avoid being hit as he threw another snowball at the dragon, striking him squarely in the middle of his face, again.

Siri laughed and looked at her father with a grateful smile, which Hiccup returned as the two of them went up against the energetic dragon. Toothless found he couldn't hit two targets at once, and after a few minutes, he suddenly flopped back onto the snow in defeat, giving the two of them a gummy smile.

"You lose Toothless!" Siri giggled, and Toothless nudged the 5 year old against her chest, making her smile and stroke the dragons head.

"You may have won against Toothless sweetie, but what about me?" Hiccup suddenly asked with a cheeky grin, and Siri's eyes widened in surprise as Hiccup picked up another handful of snow.

Screaming in delight, Siri suddenly ran off. With a grin, Hiccup quickly threw a snowball at his little girl, but missed. She was too fast for him, and he couldn't have been bothered chasing after her to win, so he put his arms up in defeat.

"You win Siri! I give up, I promise," Hiccup chuckled, and Siri grinned in victory and ran over to her father, who suddenly launched at his daughter and began tickling her, causing her to squeal in laughter and try to get away from her daddy.

"Daddy, you tricked me! Stop it!" Siri said through giggles as she turned to face her father the best as she was able, before managing to tickle him back. Snorting with laughter, Hiccup let go of the 5 year old in defeat. She had even out beaten him in a tickle fight. He was losing his touch.

"You win," Hiccup said with a breathless laugh, and both he and Siri collapsed onto the ground next to each other, both of them in fits of laughter. Sitting nearby, Toothless looked at them in confusion, before returning to this nap. Humans could be so confusing at times, and that includes his friend and his little girl.

As she collapsed onto the ground, Siri suddenly yawned and laid her head on her father's shoulder, closing her eyes. They had been there longer than either of them thought, and the sun was very slowly sinking behind the walls of the cove. Hiccup smiled lovingly at his daughter and placed an arm around her shoulders, kissing her blonde hair gently.

"Getting tired sweetie?" Hiccup asked her gently, and she nodded against his shoulder, before opening her eyes to meet his.

"Would Aunty Ruffnut's baby be here yet, daddy?" Siri asked sleepily, and Hiccup looked thoughtful.

"She might have. Do you want to go back? It's getting late anyway," Hiccup said softly, and Siri nodded with another yawn.

"I hope mummy is feeling better," Siri said worriedly.

Hiccup frowned anxiously. "I think it's time to go back," he said quickly. "I want to check on mummy. Plus you, young lady, are beginning to fall asleep anyway," Hiccup said with a grin as he stood up and held out his hand to help her up.

"Do you think mummy is better?" Siri asked him nervously as Hiccup helped her up onto Toothless's saddle.

Hiccup gave her a reassuring smile. "I'm sure Lagatha found out what's wrong, sweetheart." In the back of his mind though, he suddenly remembered what Lagatha had said to him before he left and grew curious as to what she meant. He was soon going to find out



\_exactly\_ what she had meant.

\* \* \*

><p>When Hiccup and Siri landed back in the village a little while later, the sun was just sinking behind the horizon and night was slowly approaching. They had been out later than they thought and were unsure of whether or not Ruffnut had had the baby yet, or if there was anyone around to ask. As they both hopped off Toothless's back, they heard Fishlegs' excited voice behind them.<p>

"Hiccup, Siri!"

The two of them turned to see Fishlegs' excited face hurrying towards them, flushed with both excitement and pride, which they could still make out, even in the dark shadows being cast over the village.

"I have a baby girl, Hiccup! Ruffnut gave birth to a little girl an hour ago!" Fishlegs exclaimed proudly as he reached them, and both Hiccup and Siri beamed widely.

"Congratulations, Fishlegs! What's her name?" Hiccup beamed.

"Kelda. Kelda Ruffnut Ingerman. She's so beautiful, Hiccup, and Ruffnut did amazing," Fishlegs said, his voice full of pride that Hiccup had never heard before, even with Fishlegs.

Hiccup chuckled upon hearing the name. "That's one of the names Astrid considered for Siri. I didn't like it, and turned it down, but it probably suits her more than it did Siri anyway."

Siri frowned. "I was going to be called Kelda?" she asked, perplexed.

Hiccup chuckled. "You went through a lot of names before we agreed on Siri, sweetie," Hiccup said, and Siri giggled.

Fishlegs suddenly thought of something and turned to Hiccup. "Hiccup; do you know what's going on with Astrid by the way? I saw her earlier, and I swear I've never seen her so happy before. Wasn't she sick this morning?" Fishlegs asked in confusion.

Hiccup raised his eyebrows in surprise. "She was sick. Obviously she's not now, if she looks as happy as you say. I'm about to go home now anyway," Hiccup said, and Fishlegs shrugged with a grin.

"Probably just happy she's not throwing up anymore," he said. "She was still pale when I saw her, but she was happy about something, that's for sure."

"I'll go see now, then," Hiccup said. "Congratulations again Fishlegs, and to Ruffnut. We'll see the baby tomorrow, it's too late now," Hiccup added with a smile as he shook Fishlegs's hand in congratulations.

"Thanks Hiccup," Fishlegs beamed, as he went to go home to his wife and new baby girl, as Hiccup and Siri followed the path to the cliffside where their house was situated, several metres back from the edge.

When Hiccup opened the door to the house, he found Astrid stretched out on the wooden couch in the middle of the room reading a book. At the end of the couch was Midnight, curled up in a little ball at her feet, fast asleep more like a little dog, than a dragon. Upon hearing the door open, Astrid looked up from the book beaming widely at them. Hiccup was relieved to note that her face was no longer pale and her colour had returned. She was looking so much better than she had that morning.

"Hey, how was your day?" Astrid asked them with a smile as Siri ran over to her, giving her a hug.

"Good mummy," Siri smiled. "Daddy and I won a snowball fight with Toothless," Siri giggled.

"That I would have liked to have seen," Astrid said grinning, before Siri looked at her mother with a worried look.

"Are you feeling better mummy?" she asked nervously, and Astrid gave her little girl a smile, before kissing her forehead.

"I'm feeling fine sweetie, don't worry," Astrid reassured her gently. "Now, I think Midnight would like her dinner, don't you think?" she asked her daughter as she nodded to the Terrible Terror by her feet. "Remember, it's not my job to feed her," Astrid said firmly. Siri nodded and called out to her dragon, who looked up quickly and followed her friend to get her dinner while Hiccup went over to Astrid.

"You hear about, Kelda?" Astrid asked him quickly with a smile.

"Yeah, I just ran into Fishlegs. He's happier than I've ever seen him," Hiccup replied chuckling.

"He was when I saw him, too," Astrid said happily, before Hiccup turned his attention back to Astrid.

"How are you feeling? You look better than you did earlier that's for sure," Hiccup said gently as he sat beside her, gently took a hold of her hand.

Astrid smiled happily at him. "I feel better, that's for sure," Astrid said thankfully.

"Do you know what it was? Lagatha said something about knowing or having inkling, but she didn't tell me," Hiccup said nervously, and Astrid bit her lip, before she smiled at him nervously.

This little gesture didn't go unnoticed by Hiccup and he frowned, perplexed.

"Is there something you're not telling me? It's not serious, is it?" Hiccup asked, worry evident in his voice.

"No, it's not serious, but it will probably come back. Possibly tomorrow," Astrid teased him, and Hiccup looked at Astrid in alarm, before Astrid burst into giggles and held his hand tightly.

"Hiccup, I'm pregnant!" Astrid beamed.

Hiccup looked at her in shock, letting that news sink in for a moment. Then he suddenly started grinning like a fool.

"You're kidding!" Hiccup exclaimed. "How far along are you?" Hiccup asked her in excitement, as he brought Astrid's hand up to his lips and kissed it lovingly, making her smile and blush.

"Lagatha thinks about 6 weeks. She thinks we didn't recognise the signs because..."

"... you didn't get morning sickness with Siri," Hiccup finished, understanding, making Astrid smile once more.

"Yeah, and now I'm getting it with this little one instead," Astrid said with a chuckle. "Lagatha thinks because I'm getting morning sickness this early, and this much, that it's going to be a frequent thing this time."

Hiccup shuddered sympathetically. "I don't get it," Hiccup said with a slight frown. "You had no morning sickness with Siri, but this time around, you're getting it?" Hiccup asked in confusion.

"Every pregnancy is different," Astrid shrugged. "I was just lucky last time, I guess," Astrid said with a smile as she brought a hand up to her still flat stomach. Smiling proudly, Hiccup placed his hand on top of hers, making Astrid look at him with a joyful smile with tears in her eyes, which she quickly blinked back with a laugh.

"Stupid hormones are starting already," Astrid said with a chuckle as she brought her hand up to wipe her eyes, and Hiccup laughed along with her.

"If yours are from hormones, what are mine from?" Hiccup said grinning, as he too had tears of happiness filling his eyes.

Astrid laughed. "Didn't you make the same joke last time?" Astrid asked him with a grin.

"Didn't you also trick me into thinking you were ill last time too?" Hiccup replied, humorously.

"You still fell for it too," Astrid remarked with a laugh, and Hiccup rolled his eyes with a smile, before he brought his hand up to her cheek and kissing her forehead lovingly.

"I love you," said Hiccup gently, and Astrid smiled tearfully at him, before bringing her hand up to his.

"I love you too."

Smiling at her once more, Hiccup brought her lips to his in tender kiss. Astrid's eyes slid shut as she kissed her husband back with all the passion she could gather, wrapping her arms around him in a tight embrace. She and Hiccup had been beginning to worry recently that they were never going to become parents again, but thankfully they had been proven wrong. It had obviously just taken time, and the two of them couldn't have been happier than they were at this

moment.

The couple were so engrossed in each other and this happiness that they didn't notice Toothless wander over to them, and were startled when he stuck his nose in between them, with a happy grin.

Hiccup and Astrid laughed, both of them patting Toothless on the head. The dragon had obviously heard their conversation and was saying his congratulations to them. He too, had been wondering when his friend and his wife would have another baby, and he was as excited as they were at the news!

"Well bud, you'll have another baby to protect soon; you up for the job?" Hiccup said with a grin at his friend and Toothless gave both him and Astrid a nudge in agreement.

"I take that as a yes," Astrid smiled, before they heard an excited voice from beside them.

"I'm going to be a big sister?"

Hiccup and Astrid turned to face Siri, who having come back from giving Midnight her dinner, was now standing by the wooden couch with a look of delight on her face.

"You sure are sweetie, and that's why mummy was so sick today. She's having a baby," Hiccup said with a smile at his daughter, who's face brightened at the news, before she ran forward and flung her arms around her mother, then her father.

"I always wanted a baby brother or sister!" Siri exclaimed eagerly, resulting in laughter from the two parents. They knew Siri had wanted a sibling, but this reaction was better than even they could have hoped for.

"Well, remember sweetie. Having a baby brother or sister means having lots of new responsibilities. You have to look after them and be a good big sister to him or her, and remember they can't play with you for a little while. You ready for that?" Astrid asked her cheerfully, and she nodded.

"That's good sweetheart, I'm proud of you. I think you are going to be an amazing big sister," Astrid said proudly as she kissed her daughters forehead.

"I think so too," Hiccup agreed, as he also gave his little girl a kiss on the cheek. Siri beamed proudly, before her face turned thoughtful.

"What's wrong Siri?" Hiccup asked the girl worriedly.

"Is this your present for Snoggletog mummy?" Siri asked in awe.

Astrid frowned in confusion, then she suddenly remembered; it was Snoggletog in less than 2 weeks time! And if Hiccup hadn't got her her present yet, she didn't need one.

"I completely forgot it was almost Snoggletog," Hiccup said in surprise, snapping Astrid out of her reverie.

"So did I," she said before she turned to Hiccup. "Hiccup, you haven't got me my present yet have you?" Astrid asked him quickly.

Hiccup looked at his wife quizzically. "Um...no. Why?" Hiccup asked, bewildered, and Astrid beamed at him proudly.

"Well, don't get me one. Siri's right; I already have my present."

\* \* \*

><p><em>Yay, Astrid's pregnant again! I hope this chapter was up to everyone's expectations on how I revealed it too. I didn't want you to find out until Hiccup did too, so it was a little more special, and a surprise to him as much you:) <em>

\_Anyway, the next chapter will focus on Siri. She loves the idea of getting a brother or sister, but like any child, she has reservations about it, so the next chapter will focus on Siri's worries about the baby! \_

\_Thanks for reading! Don't forget to review: D Remember again, NO FLAMES are appreciated, but I accept constructive criticism as long as it's KIND. \_

## 11. Chapter 11: Reservations

\_Alright guys, be prepared. This chapter IS LONG. Like, 7000 words long. I hope you don't mind long chapters!\_

\_I also want to warn you all, that this chapter gave me absolute hell. I never thought writing a chapter in Siri's perspective would have been so hard, but it was. Because of how much trouble I had with it, I'm really unsure as to how good this chapter is. I really hope I'm just bias towards my own work, and that it isn't as bad as I think, but for some reason, I'm really worried about this chapter. I don't think it's my best work :/\_

\_Anyway, I hope you at least like the chapter. If you do, good for you! :)This chapter shows Siri's feelings to the baby and what's going on.\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 11: Reservations<span>

\* \* \*

><p>Siri was bored; really bored. Stretched out on the wooden couch downstairs, with Midnight dozing on her stomach, she listened to the muffled voices of her parents from their bedroom. It seems as if her mother was sick again. Ever since Astrid had discovered she was pregnant again, just six weeks earlier, she'd had her fair share of morning sickness. Usually, she would be sick for a few hours each morning, and was able to move on with the day. Then there were days where she couldn't keep anything down, and was unable to do anything, not even get out of bed. Like today, for instance.<p>

Siri knew it must have one of those days, if her daddy was still at home. Usually, he would be gone not long after breakfast in order to fulfil his duties as Chief, but it was now mid morning, and he was showing no signs of leaving. On a typical day, her mummy would usually be out of bed by this time, regardless of her morning sickness, giving her a reading lesson before taking her out for the day. Either way, the 5 year old usually had something to do, or someone to entertain her. Today was not going to be one of those days.

Siri had barely even seen her parents that morning, besides from when her daddy had explained to her that her mother was sick, at breakfast. After that, he had disappeared back upstairs to look after Astrid who was struggling to even keep a mug of water down, let alone food, leaving Siri to entertain herself downstairs.

Siri knew it wasn't her parents fault. Her mummy couldn't keep anything down, and it was only right that her daddy was there to look after her, but why was she feeling like this? Deep down, the little girl knew it wasn't her mummy and daddy's fault, they didn't mean to, but she felt like they were ignoring her. Her mummy had promised her that they'd go flying today, and now she was left alone.

Siri jumped as she felt something against her hand. Looking down, she saw Toothless, licking her hand with a sympathetic look in his eyes. He too, had been overlooked so far that day, and knew how the little girl was feeling. Siri gave the Night Fury a grateful smile, and stroked the dragons head gently.

"Hey Toothless," she said with a smile.

Midnight awoke hearing her friend's voice, and noticing the sad look on her face, jumped up on her chest and licked her face in comfort, emitting giggles from the young girl. She wasn't alone after all; she had the dragons to keep her company, and she was about to get up and play with them, when she suddenly heard her daddy's voice.

"I'm getting you some nausea herbs, Astrid, you can't keep going like this," he was saying. Siri may not have been able to see her father, but she could tell by the sound of his voice that he was worried.

The girl could just make out her mother protesting from the room, but couldn't make out what she was saying. Either way, the next moment her father walked out of the room, with an anxious look etched onto his face, but his face brightened at the sight of his daughter, slightly.

"Hey sweetie, do you want to come with me to get some herbs for mummy?" Hiccup asked her with a small smile. Siri's face brightened at that offer, and she quickly stood up.

"Sure daddy".

"Alright then, come on," said Hiccup, before he turned to Toothless. "Bud, would you mind watching over Astrid for me until I get back?"

Toothless's face turned to one of disgust, at the thought of being in the same room with her. Sure, he loved her, but seeing someone sick

wasn't his thing.

"I know you don't like the sight of sick bud, but I don't want to leave her alone. Just this once, bud, please?" Hiccup asked his friend, desperately. Toothless saw the look of worry in his rider's eyes, and nuzzled up to him in agreement, and Hiccup sighed in relief.

"Thanks bud. I'll be back soon, I promise," Hiccup said, as he stroked the dragon's head gratefully.

"I don't need a babysitter, Hiccup! It's just morning sickness!" Astrid yelled stubbornly from the bedroom.

Hiccup sighed, but gave a small chuckle. True Astrid form, but whether she liked it or not, Toothless was staying with her.

"No arguing, sweetie, Toothless is staying whether you like it or not!" Hiccup yelled back, before he gestured to Siri, who gave out a giggle. She knew they had to leave now, before her mother had a chance to argue.

Siri quickly gestured to Midnight as they left the house and the little dragon followed, and flew beside her as they went towards the village. Siri wasn't even paying attention as she walked behind her father, and wasn't expecting him to stop, causing her to run into the back of him.

"Sorry, sweetie," Hiccup said distractedly. Siri looked up and saw her father had stopped at the forge and was talking to Gobber and Valka, who was helping out for the day, before frowning. Why had they stopped there? Weren't they heading to Lagatha's together?

"Hey mum, Gobber, do you think you could take care of Siri for the day? Astrid's sick, and it's not fair that she's stuck in the house with nothing to do" Hiccup said. Siri's eyes widened in shock at this request; why wasn't her daddy taking her with him to the healers? She could help her mummy, surely!

"Astrid's got morning sickness again, dear?" Valka asked sympathetically.

"Yeah, nothing's staying down, and she can't really do anything. Would you mind watching over the village today, mum?" Hiccup asked hopefully.

"Course I will, Hiccup. Just take care of Astrid, Gobber and I will watch Siri," said Valka.

"Daddy, I want to help you with mummy," Siri interrupted hopefully.

Hiccup looked at his daughter, and gave her a small smile, before bending down in front of her.

"Sweetie, your mummy isn't well. It's not a job for a 5 year old, and there's nothing for you to do at home. You'll have lots more fun with Grandma Valka and Uncle Gobber," Hiccup said gently.

"But I can help; please daddy? She needs us," Siri said pleadingly.

"Sweetie, I need to take care of mummy, and it's not very exciting at home. It'd be better if you stayed here," Hiccup said patiently. Siri pouted angrily, and crossed her arms in a huff.

"But I want to \_help\_!" Siri whined.

"Siri!" Hiccup exclaimed firmly, and Siri stopped whining, but continued to pout at her father. Hiccup sighed, and gently touched his daughter's cheek.

"Siri, you won't be as bored if you stay here. There's nothing else you can do for her, than what I'm about to do. Do you understand that sweetie?" Hiccup said softly.

"Yes," Siri said quietly. She wasn't happy, but there was no point in arguing with her daddy.

"Alright then, I'll pick you up later. I love you, sweetie," Hiccup said gently as he kissed his daughter's cheek, and stood up.

"Thanks for this mum, Gobber," Hiccup said gratefully, as he rushed off to Lagatha's house. Siri scowled at her father's retreating back, and went into the forge and flopped down on a seat angrily, Midnight sitting down by her feet. Why was it that every time her mother was sick, she wasn't allowed to stay in the house and help? Every time she offered to help, she was ignored, something she wasn't used to. Was this how it was going to be when the new baby came? If it was, Siri was worried. She had wanted a baby brother or sister so badly, but now she was unsure if she did, if it meant this.

Valka and Gobber noticed the miserable look on the little girl's face as she sat there, and they looked at each other with a frown. Siri was usually a talkative and happy little girl, yet here she was, quiet and scowling, with her arms folded and slouching on the chair.

"What's the matter, sweetie? You don't look very happy," Valka asked her gently, as she sat beside her granddaughter. Siri didn't look up at her grandmother, as she mumbled a reply, which neither she or Gobber could quite catch.

"What was that, lass, didn't quite catch that?" Gobber asked her with a grin. Siri looked at him, but didn't grin back. She didn't feel like smiling.

"Mummy and daddy are ignoring me," Siri said quietly.

Valka and Gobber exchanged a bewildered look. Where had the little girl gotten that idea from? Hiccup had brought the girl there himself because Astrid was ill. That didn't seem like they were ignoring her to them. If anything, that was a show of love, so that Siri didn't have to be at home with all that going on.

"What do you mean, they're ignoring you dear? Your daddy just brought you here himself," Valka explained gently. Siri huffed, and sunk lower into her chair. Her Grandma didn't understand.

"You don't get it," Siri pouted, as she crossed her arms again. Valka frowned worriedly, and wrapped an arm around the 5 year old



gently.

"Why don't I get it? Why don't you explain what's wrong to me and your Uncle Gobber. Maybe we can help?" Valka suggested.

Siri stayed silent for a moment, before she looked up at her Grandma Valka's worried eyes. She was obviously concerned, and Siri knew she was bound to keep bugging her until she told her. She sighed sadly, and sat up on her chair.

"Daddy won't let me help with mummy," Siri said quietly.

Valka looked at Gobber, who shrugged, not understanding why this was upsetting the girl so much. Hiccup and Astrid hadn't let Siri help a number of times before, yet it had never bothered her so much, if at all. What was different about the situation this time?

"Siri, I don't understand. Why is this bothering you so much? It never has before," Valka asked her, mystified. Siri scowled again, and looked away from her in irritation. She knew she wouldn't understand.

"Told you, you don't get it," Siri said in annoyance, keeping her eyes down on the ground.

"Then help us too, darling. Why is it bothering you that you can't help?" Valka coaxed gently.

Siri looked up at her Grandma, brows furrowed. Why was it bothering her? Now that she was being asked why, she suddenly found she didn't have the answer.

"I...I don't know," Siri confessed quietly.

Valka placed an arm around the girl's shoulders once more. There was something bothering the little girl, and she and Gobber were determined to find out what it was.

"You said you don't like not being able to help. Why?" Valka asked her softly. Siri thought for a moment, before answering.

"I want to show I can help too," Siri answered sadly. Midnight looked up, hearing the change in tone in her human's voice, and jumped up onto her lap, and curled up. Siri gave a small smile, and absentmindedly stroked the dragons back, as Valka and Gobber thought on this answer. Gobber had been around Hiccup since this age, in the forge, and tried to think back to any moments like this, that could help in this situation. Valka sat there in silence, feeling guilty that she was unable to help in this situation due to her long absence from her son.

"Siri, why do you want to help so badly? What's different?" Gobber asked, as he too, sat next to the girl on her other side on the chair.

Siri looked at her Uncle Gobber in confusion. "What do you mean, Uncle Gobber?" she asked, puzzled.

"Have you wanted to help more, since your mummy found out she was pregnant?" Gobber asked knowingly. Valka raised her eyebrows in

surprise. By Thor, that could be it! She looked back at the little girl, whose eyes were widening in realisation, before she nodded in agreement.

"So, why do you want to help your mummy so bad?" said Gobber patiently.

"Because she's sick all the time," Siri said glumly.

"You know that morning sickness is very normal for her, don't you Siri? You can't really do anything more than your daddy is already doing," Gobber said gently.

At those words, Siri huffed in anger again, turning away from the two of them. Looking back to what he just said, Gobber realised, some of which, the elder Viking, used to see often in her father, at that age.

"You feel useless, don't you lass?" Gobber said, undoubtedly, making Siri look at him in surprise. Maybe they did understand more than she did, herself.

"It's your daddy that's always helping your mummy these days, isn't it? Every time you try to help, you get told there's nothing more you can do. You feel as if no one trusts you, or that you're being ignored. Am I right?" Gobber said kindly.

Siri sat there in silence for a moment, processing these thoughts. For a moment, she wasn't sure if this was what was wrong, but after a few moments, it suddenly hit her; that was exactly what was wrong, and she hadn't realised it. A wave of emotions suddenly engulfed the little girl, and what she was feeling suddenly burst out, like a baby dragon exploding out of its egg.

"Daddy is always helping mummy!" Siri burst out. "I know mummy is sick, but she gets all the attention! I want to stay home, and be with mummy, but daddy says no. They ignore me, Uncle Gobber" she said, as she went from staring at her shoes to looking at Gobber, who was listening intently. "Mummy said I have to be a good big sister, and a good girl, but I'm not allowed to help. I want to show mummy and daddy I can be a good big sister, but I can't, and mummy and daddy will be mad". Siri looked up to the two older Vikings as tears began to fill her eyes. "I'm scared of being a big sister," Siri said tearfully.

Valka and Gobber were surprised at this outburst. They both knew there was something bothering the girl, but neither of them expected her to come out with all that. Now they understood. Siri not only felt ignored; she was scared. Scared of not being the big sister she wants to be, or thinks she's expected to be. Not only that, but there was a bit of jealousy hidden in the girl's tone towards not only her mother, but possibly towards the baby as well. Either way, she didn't understand how she felt, nor meant it. She was only 5, after all.

"So, that's what's been bothering you. Siri, come here, dear," Valka said gently, as she held out her arms for her granddaughter, who didn't hesitate to crawl onto her lap, and into her arms. Siri looked up her grandmother with tear filled eyes, who looked back at her with a serious, yet caring expression.

"Siri, you don't have to be scared. Your parents don't expect you to be perfect. All they want is for you to be there, for your new brother or sister, and to love them. You don't have to take care of your mummy just to prove this to them," Valka said, and Siri looked up at her with a sad expression.

"But I want to help my mummy, like my daddy does. If I do, they won't ignore me," Siri said quietly.

"Siri, your mummy is going through a tough time right now," Valka said gently, as Siri looked up at her once more. "She's never had morning sickness before, so it's hard on her. Your daddy is trying his best to help her, and that's why they take you to other people for the day". Siri shifted awkwardly in her lap, but didn't interrupt. "They don't mean to ignore you, sweetie. It's just they've never had to deal with something like this before, and this is how they're dealing with it. Do you understand, dear?" she asked the little girl gently.

At these words, Siri's eyes met Valka's, and she gave a nod of understanding. She knew her parents didn't mean it, but that didn't stop her from feeling the way she did, as much as she felt guilty about it. This must have shown, as in the next moment, Valka gave her a sympathetic smile.

"Do you feel guilty for feeling like this, sweetie?" Valka asked her gently, making Siri look down at the floor in embarrassment.

"You don't have to be embarrassed sweetie, it's only natural. Why don't you talk to your mummy and daddy about how you feel?" Valka suggested. Siri's eyes widened in panic, and she shook her head, at this suggestion.

"Why not?" Valka asked her, bewildered.

"They might get mad," Siri said anxiously, as she twisted her hands around in her lap.

Valka looked confused at this answer. "Why would they get mad?"

Siri looked down at the ground again, and mumbled something incomprehensible, that neither Gobber, nor Valka, could quite catch.

"What was that lass?" Gobber asked kindly. When Siri looked up, both Vikings were surprised to see tears welling up in the young girl's eyes once more.

"Mummy and daddy don't mean to ignore me, I will make them feel bad," said Siri tearfully.

"Oh sweetie, they won't feel bad. They will be happy that you're telling them. If you tell them, they can help," Valka said softly, as she pulled her granddaughter into a gentle embrace, and she sniffled a little.

"They won't be mad?" Siri asked timidly, and Valka smiled and shook her head.

"No, they won't, sweetie. They wouldn't be mad at you for being honest," Valka said reassuringly, and Siri managed to give her grandmother a tiny hint of a smile, before she suddenly teared up again.

"But I still want to be the best big sister I can be, what if I can't, Grandma?" she half sobbed.

Valka suddenly cupped the little girl's chin, and gently lifted her head, so that her tear-filled eyes were looking at her. "You listen to me sweetie. You do not have to be a perfect big sister," Valka stressed. "You can only try your best, and if you do something wrong, you learn from it. Do you think your mummy and daddy were perfect parents as soon as you were born?" Valka asked her firmly.

Siri's eyes widened in surprise at these words, and Valka nodded at her.

"That's right; they weren't perfect straight away, either," Valka chuckled. "It took them awhile before they found their feet as parents."

'Probably still are," Gobber noted, with a laugh. Valka let out a chuckle, before nodding in agreement.

Siri looked thoughtful at these words, before finally, a large smile appeared on her face, before flinging her arms around her Grandma in a tight hug. Valka chuckled, before carefully wrapping her arms around the young girl, hugging her back.

"Thank you Grandma," Siri said happily, as she kept her arms around her neck.

"Now, Siri," Valka started, as she let go of her, "don't try to be perfect. Just try your best, and your parents will be proud of you. Do you promise that, dear?"

"Yes," Siri said cheerfully, as she stood up from her lap, before Gobber chimed in.

"Nobody's perfect lass, I bet you'll fail many a time as a big sister, before this little one is grown up. It's all a part of the experience," Gobber said without thinking, making Valka groan and roll her eyes, as Siri's eyes widened in horror.

"That's not helping, Gobber," Valka said, in irritation, as she gestured towards the little girl.

Gobber grinned sheepishly. "Sorry, that came out wrong, didn't it?"

Valka sighed in annoyance, before turning her attention back to her granddaughter. "What Gobber means, is that you'll just have to learn how to be a big sister as time goes on. Some things will be good, some bad. You can't always be perfect. I couldn't name anyone who is". Valka suddenly sighed guiltily as she remembered all the years she wasn't even around for her own son. "I wasn't even there for your daddy, sweetheart, now that's not perfect is it?" she asked the little girl sadly, who looked up at her grandmother with a small smile.

"But daddy forgives you," she reminded the older woman kindly, making Valka smile back at the little girl.

"I know he does, dear, but do you see what I mean?" she asked sadly. "No one is perfect." Siri gave her a reassured smile, before giving her a light nod in understanding.

Gobber interjected quickly in order to avoid an awkward moment with his friend. "Your parents had their fair share of failures as kids, and as parents," Gobber said with a grin. "You learn as you grow lass, nothing else to it. Your dad messed up heaps as a kid, and look at him now!" Gobber said cheerfully.

Siri's worried look vanished and she suddenly burst into fits of laughter. "Daddy said he did!" Siri exclaimed.

"Oh, he certainly did. It just proves you don't have to be perfect, lass," said Gobber, as he gave her reassured smile, which she returned.

"But what if I can't be a good sister?" Siri asked nervously, before another voice chimed in.

"Who's worried about being a good sister?"

Siri, Valka and Gobber looked up to see Ruffnut and Fishlegs coming past the shop; Ruffnut holding a sleeping 6 week old Kelda in her arms. It appeared to have been Ruffnut who had spoken.

"Siri's afraid she's not going to be a good sister when Astrid has the baby," Valka explained to the new mother.

Ruffnut turned her attention to the young girl, and gave her a grin. "Well, we can't have that now, can we?" Ruffnut said, as she and Fishlegs entered the forge.

"What are you doing?" Fishlegs asked her in bewilderment, as Ruffnut began to walk over to Siri. Upon hearing the question, she turned around to face her husband.

'Duh, I'm helping Siri. We don't want her to be worried, do we?" Ruffnut asked him.

'No, but how are we going to do that, Ruff?" Fishlegs replied.

Ruffnut rolled her eyes with a smile, before turning to face the 5 year old. "Do you want to hold Kelda, Siri?" Ruffnut asked her with a grin.

Siri's eyes lit up in excitement. "Do you mean it, Aunty Ruff?" Siri exclaimed joyfully.

"If you sit down, I'll let you hold her. That way you'll get a feel of being a big sister. Sound good to you?" Ruffnut asked her. Siri nodded eagerly, before almost running to the nearby seat, and throwing herself down upon it, causing laughter among the group.

"Have to admit, this is a good idea, Ruff," said Fishlegs with a smile, as he watched Ruffnut gently placed 6 week old Kelda into Siri's waiting arms. Siri's eyes widened in awe, at the tiny baby in her arms, and she beamed happily at Ruffnut and Fishlegs.

"She's so tiny," Siri said in amazement, and Ruffnut sat next to her with a smile, glad that her idea was being so well received.

"Make sure you cradle the head Siri. She's only little," Fishlegs chimed in, and Siri looked at him, giving him a serious nod, before turning her attention back to the baby. She was finally starting to feel comfortable, when Kelda suddenly emitted a loud whine.

Siri panicked and looked at Ruffnut, her eyes fearful. "She doesn't like me," Siri said in a panic.

"No, no, she just doesn't know you. Don't be afraid," Fishlegs said gently, to the little girl.

Sure enough, after a few moments, Kelda seemed to decide that Siri wasn't a scary person, and calmed down. Her eyes drooped, and before long, she was fast asleep once more, cuddled up in Siri's arms. Siri relaxed a little, and she looked up at Ruffnut, a look of relief showing on her face, yet worry still evident in her eyes. It was this look that didn't escape Ruffnut's notice.

"See, Kelda just needed to get use to you. Why are you still worried?" Ruffnut asked gently, as she placed an around the girl's shoulders, a gesture which surprised everyone there. It seems as if becoming a mother had matured the once troublemaker.

Siri looked down at the baby girl in her arms, then up at Ruffnut's sympathetic face, before answering.

"What if my baby brother or sister is scared of me, like Kelda just was?" Siri asked nervously.

Ruffnut frowned. "Why would they be scared of you, Siri?" she asked. When the little girl didn't answer though, it was Valka who answered instead.

"She thinks being a big sister means you have to be perfect at it," she explained.

Both Ruffnut and Fishlegs snorted at this comment, and they both gave the young girl an amused look.

"Perfect, where did you get that idea from? Being a big sister doesn't mean you have to be perfect, it's meant to be fun," said Fishlegs with a chuckle.

"Tuff and I aren't perfect siblings, and we're just fine. Fish and I aren't perfect parents either, trust me," Ruffnut chortled, and Fishlegs nodded with a laugh as well.

"Being perfect is impossible, Seer," Fishlegs said. "You should have seen Ruff and I the first night with this little one". Fishlegs nodded his head towards the baby in Siri's arms. "Ruffnut went through 5 diapers before managing to get one on, and it took me half the night to calm her down! You just learn as you go, you don't try

to be perfect," said Fishlegs reassuringly.

At these comments, Valka and Gobber both looked at Siri with a look that plainly said, 'I told you so', making the 5 year old burst into fits of giggles. Maybe she was being silly after all.

"See, we told you no one was perfect, dear. Believe me, you should ask your parents some of the things they went through when you were a baby, then decide if you have to be perfect," Valka said a chuckle, as she remembered a few certain moments that could always guarantee a laugh.

"Really?" Siri asked her incredulously, her eyes widening at the knowledge, even her mummy and daddy weren't perfect.

"Really. You should hear some of the stories they have! " Valka said, "Especially, when you were a baby". Knowing which story Valka was talking about, everyone gave a laugh.

The sound of everyone laughing woke Kelda, who looked up at Siri with curious eyes. Siri held her breath nervously, before Kelda seemed to give a tiny smile, and stayed silent, making Siri beam wide.

"See, she likes you. You just had to give it time, which you'll have to do with your own brother or sister too," said Fishlegs with a smile, which Siri returned.

"Thank you Uncle Fishlegs, Aunty Ruffnut," Siri said happily, as she held Kelda's tiny hand, making everyone smile at the sight.

"What's going on here, huh?"

Siri looked up to see her daddy outside the window of the forge, with a large grin on his face, and she beamed at him.

"Daddy, Aunty Ruffnut let me hold Kelda!" Siri exclaimed proudly, and Hiccup smiled at her tenderly.

"I can see that. How did this happen?" Hiccup said with a smile.

"We thought we'd let Siri have a hold of Kelda, so she'd get used to it before her little brother or sister gets here," Fishlegs explained.

"Kelda likes her too," Ruffnut added with a grin, and Hiccup looked at the parents gratefully.

"I never would have thought of that. Thanks Ruff, Legs," said Hiccup appreciatively.

"It was nothing, Hiccup, Siri's loving it," said Ruffnut. Siri giggled and looked down at the baby again, allowing Valka to catch Hiccup's eye, before gesturing outside, and he nodded. Looking back, he saw Siri was still busy with Kelda, so Hiccup quietly followed his mother outside.

"What's wrong?" Hiccup asked nervously when they were out of earshot of Siri. Valka looked back to see if Siri was listening, before turning back to face her son.

"Have you noticed that Siri has been acting different lately?" Valka asked him quietly, and Hiccup frowned thoughtfully.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, did you notice the way she acted this morning? That's not really like her is it?" Valka prompted.

Siri almost never had tantrums out of the blue like she did this morning, Hiccup thought; had she been acting different? Thinking back further, he seemed to remember her being less bright and a little more under-the-foot than normal, but he had put this down to her worrying about her mother.

"Come to think of it, she has been acting different lately. I just thought she was worrying about Astrid though. She's...She's not worried about the baby is she?" Hiccup asked anxiously.

"It's part of it," Valka confirmed, and Hiccup sighed sadly. He should have known there was something more to it, than just Siri worrying about her mother. Why hadn't they seen it? Sure Astrid had been sick lately, but that was no excuse not to notice how their little girl was feeling.

"What else is it?" Hiccup asked nervously.

"Don't beat yourself up over it, Hiccup, Siri hides her feelings well. It was lucky Gobber and I got the answer out of her" Valka said calmly.

"We still should have known though, she's our daughter, for Thor's sake. Is she feeling ignored, or worried about the baby, or what?" Hiccup stressed. Valka sighed. Hiccup was going to beat himself up over this if she didn't tell him what was going on soon.

"She's feeling ignored. She understands Astrid is sick, but I think she feels as if she's getting all the attention. I think she thinks that if she helps out, that she won't be as ignored" Valka explained, resulting in a miserable groan from the young father.

"I should have realised she felt ignored," Hiccup sighed. "I have been spending a lot of time with Astrid lately, and it didn't even cross my mind that Siri felt this way". The young father looked back at his daughter in the forge, with a sad expression crossing his face. "I guess we'll need to have a talk with her when we get home," he added quietly.

"I think there might be some jealousy towards the baby as well, but it's not as easy to see," Valka said in undertone. "Siri also has it in her head that she has to be the perfect sister. How a 5 year old thinks that though, is beyond me," Valka added, baffled.

Hiccup gave a weak chuckle. "Not for me it's not. Siri takes after her mother in many ways, and wanting to be perfect, or get things perfect, is one of them," Hiccup said with a sigh.

"Ohh, that explains that then. We've managed to calm her down for now, but I think you and Astrid may need to talk to her. Just to help her adjust," Valka suggested, and Hiccup nodded in agreement.



"I'll talk to Astrid about it when we get home. I can't have my baby girl thinking that she has to be perfect, or that she's being ignored. We would never do that," Hiccup said sadly.

Valka gave her son a gentle hug. "I know you wouldn't dear, don't worry about it. Just have a talk with her, and it will be fine. She's a good girl, she'll understand".

Hiccup nodded. "I will. Thanks for telling me, mum".

"Anything for my granddaughter," Valka said with a smile. Hiccup nodded at his mother gratefully, before turning to his daughter.

"You ready to go, sweetie?" Hiccup asked her, and Siri looked up at him; a disappointed look appearing on her face. She was having fun with baby Kelda, and didn't want to leave at that moment. This didn't escape Hiccup's notice, and he was about to try and persuade her to come home, when Ruffnut came to his aid.

"I think it's time to take Kelda home now, anyway. She'll get restless soon," Ruffnut said quickly, as she gently relieved Siri off the baby girl, and held her tightly in her own arms.

"Awww," Siri pouted, as the baby was taken out of her arms.

Hiccup gave his daughter a soft chuckle. "I'm sure Ruffnut and Fishlegs will let you hold her again, sweetie, but we have to go home," Hiccup explained gently.

"You can hold her anytime you see us, Siri, I promise," Fishlegs promised.

"OK!" Siri exclaimed, satisfied with that promise. Standing up, she ran over to her father, and took his outstretched hand, ready to go home, Midnight quickly following her human.

"Thanks for taking care of her mum, Gobber. I appreciate it," Hiccup said appreciatively, and they nodded at Hiccup smiling.

"Anytime, lad. Tell Astrid I hope she gets better" Gobber said.

"She's fine now, she's out of bed and eating at least," Hiccup said relieved, before he and Siri began to walk home, through the village and up towards their cliffside house. The sun was slowly starting to sink lower in the sky, as it reached mid afternoon.

When Hiccup opened the door, the first thing he and Siri saw, was Astrid finally out of bed, sitting on the wooden couch in the middle of the room. Her legs were curled beside her, and her hair was flowing loosely down her shoulders. Her face was still pale, but both father and daughter were relieved to see the colour was slowly returning back to her cheeks.

"Hey, mummy," Siri said happily, and Astrid looked up with a smile at her daughter.

"Hey sweetie, you have fun with Grandma?" said Astrid kindly, as Siri ran over to her mother and gave her a tight hug, which Astrid

lovingly returned.

"Yes, Aunty Ruffnut let me hold Kelda," Siri said elatedly.

"Did she now? You're a lucky little girl then, aren't you? Astrid said with a grin, and Siri nodded, before she frowned.

"I need to go!" Siri said with a hint of urgency in her voice, before she raced out of the house, to make it to the outhouse in time. Hiccup and Astrid looked at each other with a laugh, at how random Siri could be, especially in the times that she needed the bathroom. Luckily for Hiccup, this was perfect timing, as he'd needed to talk to Astrid about Siri anyway. Hiccup looked outside to see Siri was nowhere in sight, before sitting down next to his wife.

"What's that look for, Hiccup? Is something wrong?" Astrid asked anxiously as she noticed the worried look on Hiccup's face.

"Have you noticed Siri has acted differently lately?" Hiccup asked her.

Astrid frowned. That seemed to be an odd question to ask.

"I mean, has Siri seemed annoyed lately, or upset about something?" Hiccup explained, and Astrid looked at her husband thoughtfully.

"I'm not sure, most days I'm sick until at least lunchtime, and I don't really notice". Astrid bit her lip in thought, and then looked back at Hiccup. "Actually come to think of it, Siri has seemed a bit funny towards me on days that I'm sick," Astrid said quietly. Hiccup nodded, before he began to explain everything that his mother had told him about Siri.

As Hiccup explained to Astrid what his mother had found out about their daughter, Astrid's face went through an entire range of emotions; shock, confusion and a hint of guilt passed through her face as Hiccup explained gently, and as he finished, a dejected look, head held in hands, almost as if she was ready to burst into tears, but was just, only just, holding them back.

"I can't believe we didn't notice that she felt ignored. How could we do that to our own daughter?" Astrid said miserably, as she laid her head on Hiccup's shoulder. Hiccup placed his arm around her shoulders gently, and kissed her hair softly.

"You've been sick Astrid; it's not your fault. We've just been so busy," Hiccup said gently to her. Astrid looked up at him with a look of guilt in her eyes though.

"She's our baby girl Hiccup, we should have known," Astrid stressed, before adding. "Plus, to have her think she has to be the perfect sister is even worse. Does she think we expect that?!" Astrid exclaimed in amazement.

Hiccup shrugged, with a sigh. "I don't know, but when she gets back, we'll talk to her. We should have talked to her in the first place, but better late than never," Hiccup said.

"True" Astrid agreed with a sigh, before looking at the door. "She's

taking awhile, isn't she?" Astrid said with a hint of worry in her tone.

Hiccup chuckled. "This is Siri you're talking about. It takes her 10 minutes to go," said Hiccup, and Astrid gave a laugh. That was certainly true.

Just as Hiccup said that though, the door opened, revealing Siri. Hiccup and Astrid looked at each other, before Hiccup turned his attention back to his daughter.

"Siri, can mummy and I talk to you for a moment?" Hiccup asked gently.

Siri's face turned to a look of panic. "Have I done something wrong daddy?" she asked quickly.

"No sweetie, you haven't. It's just Grandma told me what you told her today," Hiccup explained softly, and he watched as Siri's face turned from happy to fearful, and she looked down at her shoes in embarrassment. She should have known her Grandma would tell her daddy.

"Siri, come here sweetie. We're not mad," said Astrid gently, noting her daughters discomfort.

Siri looked up at her mother, her face red with either embarrassment, or anger, the young mother couldn't tell, before shuffling over to her, and climbing up onto her mother's lap.

"Siri, why were so scared to tell us you felt this way?" Astrid asked her sadly, as she wrapped her arms around her daughter's waist. Siri looked up at her mother, with a sheepish expression, before mumbling something, neither parent could make out.

"Siri, don't be afraid. Tell us, baby," Hiccup said as he moved some of her blonde hair out of her face, and was taken aback at the tears filling her sky blue eyes.

Siri looked at her father sadly. "I thought you and mummy would be mad, or feel bad".

"Oh sweetie, we wouldn't" Astrid said, before Hiccup could speak. "You're our little girl, and you mean everything to us. That means you can tell us anything, no matter what," Astrid added, as she stroked her daughter's hair lovingly.

"But I know you don't mean to ignore me mummy. I feel bad," said Siri, as she tried to hide her tears.

"You feel bad for what you feel? Oh baby, it's nothing to feel bad about. We love you very much. We would never feel bad, or be mad because of that," Astrid explained lovingly, and Siri looked at her tearfully.

"Really?" she asked quietly.

"Really, sweetie. Mummy and I just want what's best for you," Hiccup said, as he took her hands in his. "We don't want you to feel ignored or to think you can't tell us".

"We know you've felt ignored lately sweetie and we're sorry. I've been so sick at times, and daddy's just tried to help me. We never meant to ignore you," Astrid said.

"We just didn't want you here when mummy's sick, because it's not very nice," Hiccup said, looking into his daughter's blue eyes. "We didn't want to burden you, as there's nothing we can do. You don't deserve to be bored all day because of this," Hiccup explained, the little girl hanging onto his every word. She knew what they were saying was true, and she wanted to hear her parents out. They hadn't meant to ignore her, and the girl knew it.

"We're sorry for ignoring you sweetie, and we promise not to let it happen again. Even when the baby comes, we'll try our best," Astrid promised, as Siri snuggled up in her mother's arms, and continued to listen.

"When the baby comes, though, it will take a lot of our time, and attention. When this happens, we want you to know that we're not ignoring you. We're just busy. That's why we said we wanted you to help out," Hiccup added.

"But that doesn't mean you have to be perfect," Astrid said. "Don't ever think you have to be perfect, baby. You'll be an amazing big sister no matter how many things you think you're doing wrong. We will always be proud of you," Astrid said, as she tears began to fill her own blue eyes once again.

Siri looked at her parents in awe. They had meant every word of that, and she knew it. Her parents had always made sure she was happy, and this was another one of those times.

"You think I'll be a good sister?" Siri asked happily, as she looked at both of her parents honest faces.

"You will be amazing sister, sweetie. Just don't try to be perfect. You're 5 years old, you're not meant to be perfect. Nobody is," Hiccup said with a chuckle, and Siri beamed.

"Even when the baby comes, we want you to know, Siri, that we will always love you. You'll always be our baby girl, and nothing will ever change that". Siri's smile widened as her mother spoke, but didn't make a move to interrupt. "You'll just have someone to share us with, that's all," Astrid said tearfully.

"Nothing will ever change how we feel about you, baby. I don't care how old you get, you'll always be my little girl, no matter what," said Hiccup as he touched his daughter's cheek tenderly, making Siri giggle.

"We will always love you, don't forget that," Astrid said emotionally.

"I won't, mummy. I love you too," Siri said happily, as she stood up on Astrid's lap and wrapped her arms around her neck in a tight hug. Astrid pulled Siri close to her and hugged her back tightly, kissing her hair, trying to stop the tears filling her eyes from falling. Stupid hormones, she thought.

Hiccup chuckled seeing Astrid trying not to cry, and gave her a loving smile which she returned. Siri let go of her mother at that moment, before crawling into her father's lap and giving him a hug as well. Now it was Hiccup's turn not to cry, and he had no hormones to blame it on! Holding his little girl after a conversation like this seemed to be getting to him too. Astrid realised this and gave him a teasing smile, and he chuckled at her, as Siri let go of him.

"Do you feel better sweetie?" Hiccup asked her, as he touched her cheek again.

Siri nodded. "Yes daddy," she said with a smile, and Hiccup smiled at her.

"Just remember baby, you don't have to be perfect," Hiccup said again, and Siri nodded. Then she remembered something her Grandmother telling her about her parents not being perfect either and she grinned.

"What's that grin for young lady?" Astrid said, with a chuckle.

"Grandma said you weren't perfect when I was born either and everyone laughed at something. What did she mean, daddy?" Siri asked in curiosity.

Hiccup looked at Astrid, and both of them knew which story Valka had obviously been thinking about, and they blushed.

"Um, I think that story can be saved for another time sweetie, don't you?"

\* \* \*

><p><em>I'll leave it up to you as what story Hiccup is thinking about there :p<em>

\_Alright, so how did you like that chapter? Was it as bad as I thought, or I am being hard on myself as usual? I know there were some good bits in this chapter, but I hope you liked it!\_

\_OK, next chapter will occur when Astrid is 6 months pregnant, and her hormone levels are causing Hiccup a world of pain! Let's just say it's going to be quite funny, what Hiccup goes through :p\_

\_Alright, once again, if you liked this chapter, don't forget to review! If you didn't, I won't oblige you to review. I know it wasn't the best chapter :( Just remember once again, that NO FLAMES will be accepted, but constructive criticism is accepted, as long as it's KIND.\_

\_Thanks for reading! \_

## 12. Chapter 12: Hormones

\_I know I only updated a few days ago, but this chapter came a lot easier than the last, so it was written a lot quicker too! Thank you to everyone who reviewed and supported me last chapter, despite my dislike for the chapter too. I really appreciated it, and I actually

don't mind the chapter as much now. \_

\_For anyone who wanted to know the story Valka was talking about last chapter as well, it was actually my oneshot 'Babysitting Nightmare'. He's never let Hiccup or Astrid down for that story!\_

\_I said in the previous chapter that Astrid's hormones cause Hiccup a lot of grief in this chapter, and boy I wasn't wrong! She is in a very foul mood, and when I say that, I'm not joking! :p Its both funny, and scary at the same time, but that's hormones for you lol. I make up for it by the end of the chapter though, so don't worry!

\_

\_I hope you all like this chapter. I had a blast writing it, and I actually don't mind it, for once. I hope you all like it though! :)\_

\* \* \*

<p><span>Chapter 12: Hormones<span>

\* \* \*

<p>"Hiccup, can you help me up?!"<p>

Hiccup looked up from the table, where he was giving Siri her daily reading lesson, and saw Astrid was trying to get up off the wooden couch and failing. At 6 months pregnant, his wife looked more like 7 or so, and despite having 3 months to go, was already having problems getting up, or standing for long periods at a time.

"Well, don't just sit there and stare, help me!" Astrid exclaimed irritably from the couch, when Hiccup didn't get up.

"Right, sorry sweetie," Hiccup said quickly, as he got up and went over to his wife's aid. Holding onto her hand, he gently pulled her up from her seating position with a groan.

Astrid glared daggers at her husband. "Don't sweetie me; you're not the one who can't even get up off the seat!"

"You're pregnant Astrid, it happens. Remember, Annika couldn't even sit on the bed without needing help for a time," Hiccup said with a grin, which disappeared quickly when Astrid narrowed her eyes.

"Yeah, but lucky for her, she no longer has to carry the weight around," Astrid retorted bitterly.

It was true. Just 4 weeks previously, Annika and Tuffnut had become proud parents to a baby boy they had named Eric Tuffnut Thorston. Since Astrid had become the only one in their small group of friends pregnant, her mood swings had gradually increased, leaving Hiccup bewildered.

"Astrid, why don't you go for a walk if you don't want to sit down again?" Hiccup suggested helpfully.

"Fine, kick me out, see if I care!?" Astrid said crossly, and before Hiccup could say anything more, she turned and left the house,

slamming the door behind her. Hiccup winced, and gave a frustrated sigh. This was going to be a long day.

"Daddy, is mummy mad at you?" Siri's voice came from the table.

Hiccup turned to face his daughter with a smile, before going over and sitting back at the table once more. "She's just in a bad mood sweetie; it's nothing to worry about. It happens when a woman is pregnant."

"Is she going to stay mad?" Siri asked nervously, looking the door where her mother had disappeared out of, in a huff.

"She'll calm down, Siri, I promise," Hiccup said with a reassured smile at his daughter. "You don't have to worry about that though, since you'll be at Lennart's tonight".

"I can stay and help, daddy," the girl offered.

Hiccup faced his daughter with a grin. "You get to have a sleepover tonight; don't stay here just for me!"

Siri grinned cheekily. "You want to come with me, daddy?"

Hiccup raised his eyebrows. "You are being very cheeky, you know that sweetie?" Hiccup said. "I'd like to see you say that around mummy."

The little girl suddenly stopped laughing, and grinned sheepishly. There was no way she would say that directly to her mother at the present time, that's for sure!

Hiccup chuckled. "I didn't think you would." Kissing his daughter's head, Hiccup closed the book they'd been reading. "Why don't you go get your satchel and I'll take you to Lennart's sweetie?" Hiccup suggested.

Siri's eyes lit up and she scraped the chair on the floor, as she quickly stood up, and raced upstairs to her bedroom in order to collect her satchel. Hiccup sighed. He couldn't have chosen a better night for the little girl to leave the house. Hiccup could tell that Astrid would still be in a mood tonight, and thought that it would be best for the little girl that she wasn't in the house, just in case - Astrid could have a temper when she was moody like this, even if she didn't mean or even want to be angry.

Hearing his rider's sigh, Toothless perked up from his spot nearby, and gave his friend a quizzical look. Hiccup gave a laugh and stroked the dragons head as he came over to him, and nudged him in reassurance.

"I don't know about you bud, but I think we're in for a long night," Hiccup sighed. Toothless let out a low coo in agreement, knowing what his human was talking about.

"I'm ready to go, daddy!"

Hiccup looked up at the top level of the house to see his daughter rushing down the stairs, with a bag over her shoulder. She was ready

to go.

"You didn't forget anything, sweetie?" Hiccup asked. Siri frowned, and looked down at her bag, and checked. It didn't seem like it.

"Alright then, let's go."

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup and Siri arrived at Snotlout and Anna's house just as the sun began to set. As they walked through the village, neither of them had been able to spot Astrid and Hiccup couldn't tell if that was a good thing or a bad thing.<p>

"Hey Hiccup, Siri," Anna greeted them as she opened the door, with 1 year old Sigmund resting on her hip.

"Hi Anna, thanks for taking Siri tonight," Hiccup said with a smile, as Siri spotted Lennart and raced inside. Looking back at Anna, Hiccup said in a low tone, "I have a feeling it'll be better for her here tonight than at home anyway."

"Astrid?" Anna guessed. "I saw her earlier, and she did not look happy. Hormones, again?"

Hiccup nodded with a groan. "I don't remember her being this bad with Siri! She's been in a foul mood all day."

Anna gave the young Chief a sympathetic laugh. "It'll pass, don't worry," Anna said with a chuckle, as Snotlout came up to his wife.

"What'll pass?" he asked curiously.

"Astrid's mood swing," Anna replied, as she passed a fussy Sigmund over to his father.

"Astrid? If earlier was anything to go by, you're going to have fun tonight, Hiccup!" Snotlout sniggered. "She looked like Anna in a bad mood."

Anna raised her eyebrows at her husband. "Excuse me?" she said quietly.

Snotlout opened his mouth to respond, but found he couldn't find the right words, and he shut it again. He had learnt over the past 6 years not to argue with his wife.

Anna giggled. "I didn't think so," she said, her eyes gleaming with laughter.

Hiccup sighed. That was his cue to go. If Astrid was as bad as Snotlout was saying, he'd better be home when she got there, to avoid anymore arguments. He didn't want to mess with his wife like this.

"I better get going," Hiccup said quickly. "I'm not sure how Astrid will be when she gets home"



"Good luck. We'll drop Siri home tomorrow afternoon," Anna promised, and Hiccup nodded gratefully at her, before turning his attention to his daughter, just inside the house.

"Siri, I'm leaving now!" Hiccup yelled. Siri looked up from her spot on the floor, and she got up and ran over to her father, flinging her arms around his middle.

"Have a good time, sweetie, I'll see you tomorrow," Hiccup smiled at her, as he hugged her tightly back.

"Ok," Siri said with a smile. "I hope mummy doesn't stay mad at you."

Hiccup laughed, and kissed his daughter's head. "So do I, sweetie. You be good, now."

Siri nodded. "I will, daddy," as she ran off to go play with Lennart once more, before looking back again. "Tell mummy I love her," she added sweetly.

Hiccup smiled at her. "I will, sweetie, I promise". Siri smiled back and went back to what she was doing, before Hiccup looked up at Snotlout and Anna with a sigh.

"I better go face my lovely wife," Hiccup said, voice dripping sarcasm, as he said goodbye to Snotlout and Anna, and he began to walk up to his house. There was still no sign of Astrid, despite it being almost dusk. Obviously she was still around the village somewhere. Hiccup wasn't about to go look for her, especially if her mood hadn't improved. That would just make things worse.

It gave Hiccup the shock of his life then, to open the door to his house, only to come face to face with an irate looking Astrid, her eyes were narrowed, and her arms folded. Hiccup hadn't expected Astrid to be home before him, she obviously hadn't expected it either.

"Nice of you to take Siri to Snotlout's without me," Astrid said in annoyance, as she stood in front of Hiccup.

Hiccup sighed once more. Yep, he thought, still in a bad mood. Even worse than that, it was an even worse mood than before she'd left. At the moment, he thanked the gods Siri wasn't home that night after all. Seeing her mother this angry would have only upset the young girl.

"Siri was ready to go Astrid, it was only fair," Hiccup explained calmly.

"No, what's fair is that I can say goodnight to my daughter, before she leaves!" Astrid retorted angrily.

"She told me, to tell you, that she loves you," Hiccup said gently, as he placed a gentle hand on Astrid's arm. Astrid looked down at his hand, but made no mood to shrug it off. Instead, her eyes softened at those words, and she gave a small smile.

"I...I guess that's alright then," Astrid stammered sheepishly, as she lightly shrugged off Hiccup's arm to go upstairs. Hiccup watched

her ascended the stairs, and disappear into the washroom, before turning his attention to a terrified looking Toothless. Toothless wasn't used to this side of Astrid, and it was safe to say the Night Fury was petrified.

"Think she's calmed down, bud?" Hiccup cautiously asked the dragon, who looked at his rider with an uncertain look.

"Yeah, I'm not sure either," Hiccup admitted worriedly.

\* \* \*

><p>As the night wore on, Astrid went through a number of mood swings but none as strong as earlier in the day. That is, until bed time rolled around. Hiccup had finally begun to feel in the clear, when he walked upstairs to his and Astrid's bedroom, only to find her carefully surveying her baby bump in the mirror in their room. Hiccup had gotten her that mirror from Trader Johan as a gift a couple of months back, but looking at Astrid at that moment, he hoped it hadn't been the wrong decision.<p>

Cautiously entering the room, Hiccup went over to his desk and got his bed clothes out of the drawer, and went to put them on. That was, until he heard Astrid's voice.

"Hiccup, do I look fat?" she asked coolly. Hiccup looked up, his eyes widening in fear. He knew one wrong word or move could change this conversation in an instant.

"You're pregnant Astrid, not fat," Hiccup answered warily, as he went over to her, placing his arms around her rounded stomach gently.

That obviously wasn't the answer she wanted though, as she shrugged him off with a huff. "Answer the question, Hiccup. Am I fat, or not?" Astrid said angrily.

"No, you're not," Hiccup replied patiently. "You're 6 months pregnant, Astrid; you're supposed to look like that," Hiccup placed his hands on Astrid's swollen belly, with a soft smile. "You're having a baby, sweetie, you're not fat," Hiccup said lovingly.

Astrid wasn't swayed though, and her eyes narrowed once more. "What you're saying then, is that \_I am \_fat?" Astrid said dangerously.

This is going nowhere, Hiccup thought. "Astrid, you're 6 months pregnant, you are not fat," Hiccup explained softly. "You're becoming a mother again".

"Do I look fatter than I did with, Siri?" Astrid asked quickly.

Hiccup was taken aback by this question. Sure, Astrid \_was \_bigger at this stage than she been with Siri, but it was still perfectly normal. His delay in answering though gave the answer that Astrid needed though.

"I am, aren't I?! I'm fatter than I was last time, and you just won't

admit it!" Astrid yelled angrily when he didn't answer. Hiccup flinched as he saw the pure anger in his wife's eyes. "I'm fat, ugly, and useless, that's all I am, and you won't tell me!" Astrid accused, glaring daggers at Hiccup, who had no clue as to what just happened, as he stared back at his wife in complete and utter shock. He had never heard her talk like this, and it was scarier than anything he had ever experienced.

Astrid's eyes flashed dangerously, when Hiccup still refused to answer. Walking slowly over to her husband, Hiccup unintentionally felt himself back up towards the door. Not one to shy away from Astrid's mood swings, this situation even scared him, and he dealt with dragon's everyday! Stopping in front of him, Astrid crossed her arms and looked Hiccup straight in the eye.

"Admit it Hiccup, I'm fat, aren't I?"

Hiccup threw his arms up in the air in frustration. "Alright, you're a little bigger than you were with Siri, I admit it! That doesn't mean you're fat though!" Hiccup placed his hands on his wife's protruding stomach, and looked into her eyes calmly. "You look beautiful, no matter how big you get".

"But I'm still fat, that's what you're saying," Astrid repeated determinedly, looking down at her stomach once more.

"Urgh, Astrid, stop it! For the last time, you are not fat!" Hiccup exclaimed angrily. "You're being ridiculous. You look beautiful..." Hiccup trailed off quickly as he saw Astrid breathe a deep breath, and look at him with a look of pure fury. That had been the wrong thing to say, and he knew it. Crap, he thought quickly, as he watched Astrid slowly advance on him, with a look of fury fixed in her eyes.

"Out."

"What?"

"Out. Out of the house. Now," Astrid spat.

Hiccup looked at her in disbelief. "You can't be serious, right?"

"Does it look like, I'm kidding?!" Astrid threatened, as she pointed towards the door. "Get out; I don't want you here tonight!"

"Astrid, come on, you're being..."

"... ridiculous," Astrid finished for him. "Well, guess what, you can take your ridiculous, and leave! Go! Leave me alone!"

Hiccup looked at his wife in disbelief, before looking around for Toothless, only to find he wasn't there.

"Don't bother, he left ages ago," Hiccup looked up to see Astrid was following his line of vision. "At least he knew when to leave!" Astrid hissed angrily, as she turned her back on him, and walked over to the bed.

Hiccup opened his mouth to reply, but found Astrid's furious face

glaring at him from the bed, and he shut it. Hiccup looked back at the door, and then back to his seething wife.

"Where am I supposed to go?"

"Figure it out, for yourself," Astrid retorted back, before getting into bed, and turning her back on him.

Hiccup sighed dejectedly, and walked out of the room. It was in everyone's best interests if he just left. Fighting all night wasn't going to help anyone, especially when Astrid was in such a horrific mood. Staying would more likely make the situation worse, Hiccup thought.

Reaching the bottom level of the house, Hiccup saw the concerned look of his friend looking back at him from the door. Gesturing to the door, Toothless followed his rider as he opened the door, and walked out into the cold night air.

Looking back to the house, Hiccup sighed and leant back on the wall, running his fingers through his hair anxiously.

"Great, just great," he said sarcastically, as Toothless nuzzled up to his friend in comfort. Looking down at his dragon, the young man smiled, and stroked the Night Fury's head gratefully. At least Toothless was there.

"Thanks, bud."

Toothless gave his rider an understanding look, and Hiccup smiled at him gently. Looking around the deserted village, he sighed again. Where was he going to go? All his friends had babies or young children, and he didn't think disturbing them was a good option. He didn't want to alarm his daughter about the fight, by going to Snotlout and Anna's that's for sure. He wanted to keep her out of this.

Hiccup looked back at his friend with a small smile. "Well buddy, looks like we're bachelors again, at least for the night". Toothless grumbled at this. He liked his rock bed.

As Hiccup walked around the village, thinking of what to do, he saw a light on the hill, coming out of the window of his childhood home.

"C'mon, bud, let's go see if mum's willing to have a couple of freeloaders over for the night."

Walking over to the house, Hiccup raised his fist and paused before knocking on the door. Knowing his mother, Valka was going to get a good laugh out of this when she found out that Astrid had kicked him out of his own home.

Toothless had leaped up to the roof and was scrambling around on it. Hiccup heard his mother yelling out "I'll be out in a minute!" before a few seconds later, he heard footsteps coming down the stairs and across the floor. As the door opened, Hiccup's eyes met with his mother's, and Valka spoke before he could even stammer out a 'hello'.

"Hiccup? What's wrong? Is there something wrong with Astrid?" Valka asked, worriedly.

"Nothing, mum, she's alright. I think I'm the one with a problem," Hiccup said, gulping. "She kicked me out of the house. She asked me if I thought she was fat, and..." he trailed off.

Valka raised her eyebrows. "Please tell me you didn't agree, dear".

Hiccup raised his eyebrows. "Are you kidding? I'm not that stupid!" Hiccup said quickly. Valka looked at him with an uncertain look, and Hiccup sighed. "I said that she was beautiful..." Hiccup gave a nervous chuckle and he rubbed his neck sheepishly. "...then I said she was being ridiculous," Hiccup added awkwardly.

Valka was silent for a moment, before emitting a short laugh. Hiccup frowned in annoyance. This was exactly what he was afraid of. He knew his mother would laugh at him.

"Thanks for the support, mum," Hiccup said dryly.

"I'm sorry, dear," Valka apologised. "But what did you expect to happen?" She laughed again. "Astrid was in a foul mood as it was, and you go ahead and do that!" Hiccup rolled his eyes in annoyance; this wasn't the reaction he'd hoped for. "I was the same way," Valka said gently, noting Hiccup's sullen eyes. "Your father learnt very quickly to pick his words carefully when I was carrying you."

Hiccup looked at his mother in surprise at this admission, and he found himself giving his mother, a small sad smile at the mention of his late father. "How did he make it up to you?" Hiccup asked curiously.

"He made me something," Valka smiled. "I kicked him out of the house too, so the next day, he went out of his way to apologise." Valka chuckled, remembering the gift. "It was the worst made gift a Viking could make, but I accepted it, of course".

Hiccup frowned thoughtfully. A present, he thought. It would have to be good. Not any old thing would do. Astrid was madder than he'd ever seen her, and he wanted to show Astrid he was sorry. But what could he give her?

Valka noted her son's thoughtful look. "Why don't you make her a new axe or something? She loves her weapons," she suggested with a grin.

Hiccup looked up at his mother in horror. "Yeah, it's not like I need my other leg or anything!" The sarcasm dripped from his words like warm honey.

Valka laughed again. "Good point, dear. Forget I said anything!"

Hiccup returned to his thoughts once more, before suddenly his eyes lit up. "Astrid's birthday present!" he exclaimed excitedly.

Valka frowned. "But wouldn't you need it for her birthday though, Hiccup?"

Hiccup shook his head with a grin. "I have another present, it doesn't matter," Hiccup replied. "This one is almost finished. I could finish it tomorrow for her!"

"It's something she would like?" Valka asked him.

"Yep," Hiccup nodded. "I just need to finish it." Walking over to his mother, he quickly whispered it in her ear, and he grinned as he watched her eyes light up.

"It's perfect, dear!" Valka exclaimed with a bright smile. "That would be the perfect present." Valka's smile quickly changed to one of worry as a thought crossed her mind.

"What's wrong, mum?" Hiccup asked her quickly.

"Is Siri at home, with Astrid like this?" she asked anxiously.

"No." Valka looked at Hiccup in relief as he said this. "She's at Lennart's for the night, thank Thor. I wouldn't have wanted her to hear all that, that's for sure".

"I wouldn't either," Valka said quietly, before Hiccup gave a yawn.

"Go up to bed, honey," Valka said gently. "Don't worry about Astrid until the morning".

Hiccup sighed. "I wish I could, mum. I've never seen her so angry before," Hiccup looked at his mother's sympathetic eyes, who patted her sons shoulder gently.

"She'll calm down, son. Just give her some space tonight, and give her a present tomorrow, you'll see," Valka said.

"Thanks, mum," Hiccup said gratefully, before turning to Toothless. "Well bud, I guess it's just you and me tonight, huh?" Toothless gave his rider a loo coo in agreement, before following his friend upstairs. His rock bed was no longer in the room, so he was going to have to sleep on the wooden floor tonight, but making no complaints, he found a spot and settled down, while Hiccup went to the old bed.

"Just like old times, huh bud?" Hiccup said with fake cheer. Toothless gave his rider a look as if knowing he wasn't buying it, and Hiccup smiled dejectedly.

"Yeah, I'm not too thrilled either," Hiccup admitted. "It's better to give Astrid some space, though."

Toothless gave his rider a sad look, before curling up to go to sleep. Hiccup lay down himself, but found his thoughts were on his wife, and the look he gave her before he left. He just hoped he could make it up to her the following day.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup wasted no time in getting up the following morning. Both he and Toothless had had a restless night, and neither of them had

gotten much sleep. Hiccup had found himself lying awake half the night, thinking about what had occurred between him and Astrid, and whether or not she was alright. The two of them hadn't slept apart in the 7 ½ years they had been married, and it was easy to tell.<p>

Hiccup had rushed downstairs, saying goodbye to his mother and headed to the forge, as soon as he was up, with Toothless following close behind. He was going to make this up to his wife, no matter what it took. Rushing through the village, the young man hoped he wouldn't run into his daughter along the way, out of fear on what to tell her, if he did. Luckily it seemed to be too early for the little girl, and he reached the forge without incident.

"What are you doing here so early?" Gobber asked upon his arrival. "You didn't come from your house, that's for sure."

Hiccup looked up at his old mentor with an annoyed expression, which made Gobber grin back at him in amusement.

"Where were you last night, huh, lad?" Gobber asked with a grin.

Hiccup sighed. "Astrid kicked me out of the house last night." Gobber raised his eyebrows in surprise, before busting out laughing. Hiccup looked back him in irritation. "That's exactly how mum reacted, too," he mumbled.

Gobber wiped a tear from his eye, still laughing. "Sorry lad, but that's funny. What did you do?" Gobber asked, amused.

"She kept asking me if she was fat, and I said she was being ridiculous," Hiccup replied sheepishly, resulting in more laughter from the blacksmith.

"Oh, you got yourself into that lad," Gobber laughed.

"Don't need to tell me twice. I had to spend the night at mums," Hiccup muttered.

"So, what are you doing?" Gobber asked him curiously. "Making her a present?" He guessed.

"Finishing her birthday present, more like it" Hiccup said. "I'm going to give that to her when I go home". Hiccup rummaged around trying to find the present, before getting to work on it. Toothless curled up outside the forge, letting his rider do his work.

"Argh, good choice lad," Gobber admitted. "I'll leave you to it, then."

"Thanks, Gobber," Hiccup said with a smile, as Gobber went about his work, while Hiccup continued with his.

Throughout the day, Hiccup didn't see hide-nor-hair of either of his girls. Hiccup suspected his fight with Astrid had become of the gossip of the village, and therefore Snotlout and Anna were keeping Siri away, so she didn't have to be involved. If that was the case, Hiccup was grateful. On the other hand though, he also hadn't seen his wife. He hadn't seen her anywhere in the village that day, and

nobody else had seen her either, and nobody was brave enough to go and check on her, in case she was still in a foul mood. Nobody wanted to mess with the young Viking warrior in this mood.

Hiccup continued to work on Astrid's present until early afternoon, and when he was done, decided he had better head home. He hoped his wife was in a better mood than the previous day, and that he could make it up to her.

"I'm going home, Gobber," Hiccup said as he picked up Astrid's gift and placed it inside his vest. Gobber looked up from his work, and gave Hiccup a sympathetic smile.

"Good luck, lad."

"Thanks," Hiccup relied nervously, before he gestured to Toothless, who didn't make a move to get up. He wasn't going anywhere until his rider and Astrid patched things up.

"Thanks for the support, bud," Hiccup said dryly, before heading up towards his house.

Hiccup spotted his wife before he even reached the house. Astrid was sitting a few metres back from the cliff edge, looking out over the sea. Her body was relaxed, and she was sitting with her hands on her belly. Hiccup smiled. She was in a better mood. She was always in a good mood when she sat in that spot.

Hiccup slowly approached his wife, in case she was still in a bad mood. Astrid heard the slight squeaking of his metal leg, and turned to face him, and Hiccup took note of her face. She had a wide, relieved smile on her face, and her eyes were softer than they had been the previous night. Hiccup smiled at her back gently, as he sat down next to her.

"Hey."

"Hey," Astrid replied sheepishly. Looking up into Hiccup's eyes, she bit her lip nervously.

"So, where did you end up last night?" she asked him meekly.

"At mums. She seemed to think it was funny," Hiccup said with a chuckle. Astrid gave a short laugh, and looked down at the ground, sheepishly.

"Hiccup, I'm sorry," Astrid said quietly. "I shouldn't have kicked you out last night"

Hiccup gave her a reassured smile. "Astrid, its fine, you were in a bad mood. I shouldn't have said you were being ridiculous, it was uncalled for," Hiccup said gently.

"You were right though," Astrid said sheepishly. "I \_was \_being ridiculous. I'm pregnant, I shouldn't be thinking I'm fat." Astrid looked down at her protruding stomach. "Well, I am fat, but that's not the point. I shouldn't have made it sound like I hated being pregnant."

"I never thought that," Hiccup said gently. "Astrid, anyone who



thinks you hate being pregnant, even on a day like yesterday, doesn't know you well enough." Hiccup placed a hand on her belly, and beamed as he felt a faint kick against his hand. "I know how much you love this baby, and would do anything for it." Astrid smiled as she placed a hand on top of Hiccup's and she too, felt the baby kick. "You're happier than I've ever seen you Astrid, and you've been glowing lately. I never for one moment doubted your love for this baby last night," Hiccup told her firmly.

Astrid bit her lip as her eyes filled with tears, before she gave Hiccup a wide smile. Hiccup smiled back, and brought his hand up to cup her cheek instead.

"By the way, you're not fat. You look beautiful, as you always do. I meant that last night," Hiccup said tenderly, as he caressed her cheek lovingly.

Astrid blushed, as the tears in her eyes began to spill down her cheeks. Hormones or not, she didn't give a damn. Hiccup chuckled, and pressed his lips against her forehead in a soft kiss, before wrapping his arm around Astrid's shoulders. Astrid beamed widely and laid her head on Hiccup's shoulder, closing her eyes in content.

Hiccup gave out a soft chuckle. "You look as if you're about to fall asleep, there."

Astrid gave out a weary chuckle of her own. "Probably am. I didn't get much sleep last night." Hiccup saw the blush appear on her cheeks as she said this, and he kissed her hair softly. Astrid opened her eyes, and looked up at Hiccup, and was surprised to see bags under his eyes too.

"You didn't get much sleep last night, either?" Astrid asked in amazement, and Hiccup chuckled sheepishly.

"Bit hard to, when your wife kicks you out," Hiccup said humorously.

Astrid blushed. "That was mean, Hiccup... I already feel bad enough about it," she said, looking down at the grass again. Hiccup placed his hand under her chin, and lifted her head back up gently, to look into her eyes.

"It's alright, Astrid. I forgive you," Hiccup said reassuringly.

"For kicking you out?" Astrid asked incredulously.

"It was your hormones, Astrid, it wasn't your fault," Hiccup said gently. "I'm not going to stay mad at you for that." Hiccup then remembered his present, and reached inside his vest. "Besides, if you won't forgive yourself, you won't get your present," Hiccup said teasingly.

Astrid looked at him in surprise. "You made me a present, after everything I did?" Astrid shook her head. "I don't deserve it"

Hiccup smiled at her. "I made it, so I could apologise to you," he chuckled.

"You didn't do anything wrong though, it yeas me that was the problem!" Astrid argued.

Hiccup took his hand out of his vest. "Alright, if you don't want it," he said with a grin. "It's not like I spent all day finishing it, when it was meant for your birthday anyway" Hiccup looked at her with a fake pout, and Astrid rolled her eyes, with a laugh.

"Alright, you can give it to me," Astrid agreed. "But let's agree that it was nobody's fault last night and leave it at that." Astrid looked at him with a pleading expression, and Hiccup nodded at her.

"If that's what you want," Hiccup said with smile, before taking the gift out of his vest, and showing it to her.

Astrid gasped and looked up at Hiccup with a wide smile. "Hiccup, it's beautiful!" she exclaimed happily. "How long have you been working on it, before today?"

"About a month," Hiccup said. "Do you like it?"

"I love it!" Astrid replied cheerfully, as she took the present in her hands.

Hiccup had made her an exquisite leather headband. It was made of rigid leather, but was soft to the touch, and featured beautifully carved engravings of dragons etched into the leather. Every dragon featured was different, from Toothless, to a Nadder, a Zippleback, a Monstrous Nightmare, and a Gronkle...To Astrid's eyes; it was one of the most exquisite pieces of workmanship she had never seen.

"I figured since your old one was ready for the scrap heap, that I'd make you a new one," Hiccup explained. "One that represented you, more." As he was speaking, Hiccup reached up and gently took the old one off her head, before placing the new one there in its place. It was a perfect fit.

"You look beautiful" Hiccup said lovingly as he cupped Astrid's cheek once more, an action in which Astrid also repeated. Cupping Hiccup's cheek in her hand, she smiled at him tenderly.

"I love you," Astrid said contentedly, and Hiccup smiled back, and placed his hand over Astrid's on his face. Astrid leant forward and met her lips with Hiccup's and he closed his eyes in response, before wrapping his arms around her. Astrid smiled into the kiss happily. Considering everything that had happened the night before, the young woman was happier than she'd ever been in her life, while sitting there kissing her husband back with as much passion as she could give.

Breaking away, Hiccup gave his wife a small smile. "I love you too," he said gently as he leant his forehead against hers.

"EWW!"

Hiccup and Astrid burst out into fits of laughter, as they looked away from each other's eyes, and turned to face their 5 year old

daughter, who had a look of disgust on her face. Anna, who was standing right beside her, was trying her best to hold back a laugh.

"Hey sweetie, we didn't expect you home so soon," Astrid said with a grin.

"I can guess, mummy," said Siri, with a giggle, making everyone snort with laughter.

"Sorry, Astrid, I thought it was a good idea to bring her home early," Anna apologised. "We didn't mean to interrupt."

"It's fine, don't worry." Astrid reassured her, as Siri over to her mother and flung her arms around her.

"Hey, sweetie," Astrid said happily as she hugged her back tightly. "Did you have a good time?"

"Yep," Siri said excitedly. "Did you stay mad at daddy last night, mummy?"

Astrid looked at Hiccup quickly, who looked away, trying to hide his grin.

"Sweetie, you have no idea," Hiccup mumbled.

\* \* \*

><p><em>Poor Hiccup, you have no idea how sorry I felt for him while writing this chapter, but as I said, that's hormones for you!<em>

\_I want to thank KateMarie999 who wrote a tiny portion of the dialogue for me in this chapter (so tiny she actually forgot she wrote it lol). I also want to credit my boyfriend, Alex, who also wrote a few paragraphs for me when I was stuck on what to write. This chapter wouldn't have been up so quick without the help I got!

—

\_Alright, the next chapter is the birth of Hiccup and Astrid's new child! I've been doing a lot of research into childbirth for you all to make it as realistic as I can, so hopefully it should be up by next weekend. I have everything from the gender, to the personality of the baby all worked out, so no suggestions are needed, but you won't be disappointed I promise! :)\_

\_Don't forget to review! I reached my highest number of reviews for a chapter last time, and I was stoked! Remember though, NO FLAMES, but constructive criticism is fine, as long as it's KIND.\_

\_Thanks for reading!\_

### 13. Chapter 13: Special Delivery

\_I finally got up to the chapter I was most looking forward too! For awhile this week, I didn't think I was going to be able to update on time due to writers block, but I finally got into a groove and managed to finish, and I don't think it turned out too badly for once either. I hope not anyway lol.\_

\_Alright, for all my male readers, and anyone who may be a little iffy on a birth scene, I can promise you that this isn't full on. I didn't put anything in that is gross or confronting, and this a very basic, emotional chapter detailing the birth of Hiccup and Astrid's new child, and I'm sure none of you will be uncomfortable. I tried to cater for everyone :)\_

\_Also, to one of my reviewers, StarryKite, who wanted to know my age, I'm happy to give it :) I'm 23. I know I may not seem like it from the simple way I write, but that's just my writing style. I know I seem younger than I am, believe me, I act younger than I am too! But thanks for asking! :D\_

\_Anyway, enjoy the chapter!\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 13: Special Delivery<span>

\* \* \*

><p>"I have a bad feeling, Astrid."<p>

"Hiccup, stop worrying, I'll be fine."

"I'm not going to be home all day."

"What's your point?"

Hiccup sighed in frustration. Why was his wife being so calm, like she was? He was petrified! As of today, their baby was a week overdue, and what made this situation even worse was that Hiccup couldn't stay. It just so happened that not only could Hiccup and Astrid's baby make an appearance at any moment, but there was also a tribal meeting being held that day. It wasn't just any tribal meeting either; it included the whole council, as well as other tribal Chiefs, which could possibly last throughout the day and into the night. It was because of this reason that Hiccup was so hesitant in leaving his heavily pregnant wife at home alone. What if something happened?

Noticing the look of distress on her husband's face, Astrid reached for his hand, and enclosed it in her own. This motion made the young man jump, and look up into his wife's reassured eyes as she gave him a warm smile.

"Hiccup, don't worry about me," Astrid told him gently as she looked into her husband's eyes. "The baby will come when it's ready."

"What if you do go into labour, though?" Hiccup asked nervously, as he gently placed his hand upon his wife's swollen belly.

"So what if I do? It's not like it will urgent as soon as it happens," Astrid answered reasonably. "If it's anything like Siri's birth, you'll be home before anything happens."

"That's not the point though, Astrid," Hiccup said anxiously, as he squeezed Astrid's hand nervously. "I can't leave you on your own to do this."

"Hiccup, I'm not on my own," Astrid said patiently, as she glanced at Siri playing with Midnight nearby. "If anything happens, Siri knows what to do."

Hearing her name, Siri looked up at her mother, and saw her father's obvious distress at leaving her mother. Getting up, the little girl went over to her father, and wrapped her arms around him in a warm hug.

"I'm here, daddy," Siri reassured her father. "I'll look after mummy, I promise."

Hiccup looked into the face of his daughter, and then back up to his wife's, before sighing. He didn't really want to leave, but if he had too, at least his daughter was there with her.

"Alright, I'll go to the meeting. But," Hiccup looked at his wife seriously. "if you go into labour before I get home, make sure Siri gets me. Promise me that, Astrid?" Hiccup asked, with a sense of urgency in his tone.

Astrid reached up and touched Hiccup's face gently. "I promise."

With a sigh of relief, Hiccup leant in to give Astrid a kiss. Just expecting a peck on the lips, Astrid leant in for Hiccup, but was taken aback when he suddenly kissed her on the lips, longer and more passionately than she expected. Not one to complain, she leant in and deepened the kiss, while wrapping her arms around Hiccup's neck.

Siri stuck her tongue out in disgust, and walked away from the scene in front of her, but made no move to stop them. She knew her daddy was worried about her mummy, and this was his way of showing it to her. She giggled as she saw Toothless also looking away rather pointedly, as he too, was not a fan of his riders displays of affection at times either.

It wasn't until almost a minute later, that Hiccup broke away from Astrid, making them both breathless, and Astrid, blushing as red as a tomato.

"What was that for?" Astrid asked with a blush.

"Just trying to keep from going as long as possible," Hiccup said with a grin. Astrid snorted at that, and lightly punched his shoulder.

"We'll be fine, Hiccup, now go," she said with a laugh, and Hiccup nodded, before giving her another kiss and standing up.

"I'll be back as soon as I can," he promised her, as he went to walk out the door. Before he walked out, he stopped and gave his daughter a kiss on her golden locks, and gave her a smile.

"Look after mummy for me, sweetie," Hiccup said tenderly, and the little girl nodded seriously.

"I will, daddy," she promised.

"That's my girl," Hiccup smiled, before he gestured to Toothless, who begrudgingly stood up, and followed his rider out the door.

Astrid turned to her daughter as soon as the door shut behind her husband. "For a moment, I didn't think he was going to go," Astrid said.

"Me too," Siri said with a grin.

Astrid chuckled, before she gently eased herself off the couch with a groan, stretching her back. It had been aching as she got up this morning, and was even more painful as she stood up. Maybe sitting on the wooden couch wasn't such a good idea.

"Ready for your reading lesson, sweetie?" Astrid asked, as she went over to the table and picked up the book they'd been using, trying to ignore the pain in her back.

Siri nodded, and went over to the table as Astrid eased herself back into a chair beside her. How she kept getting up and down was beyond her, but she wasn't letting a bit of pain stop her. Opening up the book they had been reading, Astrid and Siri went through the pages one by one. One thing Astrid admired about her daughter was how much the girl loved to read. Even at 5 years old, she found it fascinating, despite the slow process, and it was the reason the lessons extended through most of the morning.

"Alright Siri, what's this letter?" Astrid asked her daughter an hour into the lesson. Pointing to a letter on the page, Siri frowned thoughtfully, before looking at her mother a little uncertainly.

"Um...an A?" Siri guessed cautiously, and was relieved when her mother grinned at her proudly.

"Good work sweetie, it is an A!" Astrid exclaimed proudly, before pointing to another letter. "What's this o-"

Astrid suddenly stopped. Taking a sudden intake of breath, her eyes widened as she felt a familiar sudden cramping pain, low in her stomach. Oh not now, Astrid thought frantically, as she moved a hand to her stomach. This can't happen now, not when she'd spent all morning convincing Hiccup she'd be fine!

"Mummy, are you OK?" she heard Siri ask nervously.

Looking up at her daughter, she saw Siri's eyes were wide and fearful as she noticed her mother's discomfort. Her and Hiccup had explained to their daughter what would occur when Astrid went into labour, and it was obvious the little girl had an inkling to what was happening.

Knowing she was very likely only to be in the early stages of labour, Astrid didn't let anything on to her daughter. "I'm fine, sweetie," Astrid said with a reassured smile. "It was just a kick, that's all."

Siri looked at her mother nervously. "You looked worried though, mummy."

"It surprised me, that's all," Astrid replied quickly, as she reached for her daughter's hand. "The baby just kicked harder than usual, I'm fine." Giving her daughter a confident smile, Siri nodded, before returning to her page. Astrid sighed quietly, and was relieved when the pain disappeared as quickly as it came. Hopefully, this would be like Siri's birth, and the baby wouldn't make an appearance for hours. With that hope, Astrid went back to her daughter's reading lesson, all the while, trying her hardest not to show her discomfort when another cramp engulfed her stomach again, and returned again in about five minutes.

\* \* \*

><p>This pain continued throughout the morning, and through lunch, and Siri didn't suspect anything was up, which was what Astrid wanted. She wasn't going to disturb Hiccup, when there was nothing to worry about, she thought to herself, as she cleaned up the plates from the table.<p>

"Argh!"

Dropping the plate in her hand, Astrid suddenly doubled over, as a larger, more intense pain suddenly shot through her stomach. Siri looked over to her mother hearing her low scream, and her eyes widened in fear as she saw her mother doubled over, clutching her stomach and her eyes squeezed shut.

"Mummy?" she asked fearfully as she raced over to her mother. Astrid was unable to answer her daughter as the pain continued to overwhelm her, but after a few moments, the pain very slowly started to decrease. Just as she about to answer her daughter though, she was confused when the little girl suddenly gave another yell, in surprise.

Unsure of what her daughter was yelling about, Astrid stepped forward, when she suddenly felt something underneath her boots. Looking down, Astrid's eyes widened in horror at the realisation it was water. Her waters had broken. There was no turning back now. She needed to get help, and soon.

"Siri, listen to me," Astrid said urgently as she looked at her daughter's fearful eyes. "The baby is coming. You have to go get your daddy, and bring him here. Do you understand me, sweetie?" Astrid asked her gently. Siri's eyes suddenly turned from fearful to determined, and she nodded at her mother.

"Yes mummy," Siri said seriously.

"Good girl," Astrid said quickly as she kissed her daughter's head, and Siri looked up at her mother.

"I'll be back, mummy," she said, as she suddenly raced towards the door. Wrenching it open, she bolted out the door, and ran as quickly as her legs could carry her to the Great Hall. Running through the village, she noticed a lot of people watching her, but she didn't stop for anyone. She continued to run until she reached the Great Hall, and she raced up the hundred or so stairs leading up to it, before barging into the Hall.

A hundred sets of eyes suddenly turned their attention to the young girl as she entered the hall, flushed and breathless. Ignoring them all, Siri ran up to the main table, where Hiccup was deep in discussion with another council member.

"DADDY!" she screamed, as she ran towards him and Hiccup quickly looked up upon hearing his daughter's voice.

"Siri, what is it?" he asked nervously, as he half expected what she was about to tell him.

"Mummy's having the baby!" Siri yelled frantically.

Hiccup's face suddenly paled. He knew this was going to happen, and yet he still let Astrid talk him into leaving. Frantically standing up, he quickly grabbed his stuff, breaking into a cold sweat that was visible to every person in the hall, and began to run out of the hall without saying a word.

As Hiccup neared the door, Snotlout broke ranks with the throng of Vikings and yelled as he ran "I'm coming too, I'll get Petrine!"

Hiccup heard one of the other council chiefs' yelling "Go, Son, Go!" from behind him as he raced down the steps in front of the great hall, Siri barely able to keep pace. At the bottom of the stairs, Snotlout overtook them and made a beeline for the midwife's house, before Hiccup suddenly halted at the bottom of the stairs. Looking back, he waited until his daughter had caught up to him, before speaking.

"Siri, go to Lennart's house sweetie, while I go to mummy," Hiccup said quickly, as his daughter reached him. "We'll get you when the baby arrives, OK?" Bending down in front of his daughter, he quickly enveloped her into his arms, and gave her a swift kiss on the top of her head.

"Yes, daddy," Siri said with a nod. She knew the plan.

"Alright, I'll see you soon. I love you," Hiccup said, as he rapidly stood up.

"I love you too, daddy," Siri replied with a smile, as Hiccup quickly took off towards the house, as fast as his one good leg, and his metal leg could carry him. He didn't stop for anyone as he made his way to his house, upon reaching the house; he wrenched the door open.

Upon entering the house, Hiccup was met with the sight of his wife leaning against the wooden table. She was holding her stomach; her eyes were clenched shut and her face was contorted in pain. Hiccup took a sharp intake of breath seeing her in this much pain, before rushing over to her, and wrapping an arm around her shoulders.

"Breathe, Astrid, just breathe deeply. It'll pass," Hiccup said gently, as all the knowledge from Siri's birth suddenly came flooding back. Astrid managed to give a small nod, and she took deep breaths, as the contraction slowly began to pass.



"That was intense," she gasped out as it passed over, and Hiccup looked at her, guilt evident in his eyes.

"I knew I shouldn't have left this morning" he said guiltily. "When did it start?"

"About 3 hours ago..."

"What! Why didn't you get me sooner?" Hiccup yelled, frantically.

"I didn't need too!" Astrid exclaimed, before biting her lip, and nodded towards the wet patch on the floor nearby. "Until my waters broke," she said in a low voice.

"What, already!" Hiccup exclaimed worriedly as he followed her line of sight. "Astrid, you should have got me as soon as you felt pains!"

"Well, I didn't think it was necess...ARGH!"

Astrid had suddenly doubled over once more, as yet another pain ripped through her stomach. Hiccup's eyes widened in the knowledge that this was progressing fast, before the door was suddenly slammed open, and Petrine, and Ansfrida quickly rushed in. Toothless followed them close behind, having finally caught up to his rider, before plopping down on the floor to avoid being in the way. Hiccup gave his dragon a small smile at seeing him, and Toothless gave his signature grin back at his rider.

"Oh, looks like we got here just in time," Petrine said quickly as she rushed over to the young woman. Placing an arm around Astrid's shoulders, as well as Hiccup, the two of them gently eased Astrid up the stairs to her room. Laying her down on the bed, her face began to relax, as the contraction passed once more.

"How long have contractions been going on, dear?" Petrine asked as soon as she noticed this.

"About 3 hours," Astrid answered. "They only just started to get worse about 10 minutes ago."

"How many have you had since then?" Petrine asked her.

"About 3."

"Good, good," Petrine said, pleased, as she began to set up. Astrid looked at Hiccup, who sat down beside her and took her hand in his, giving her a small smile.

"Looks like it's that time again, huh?" Astrid said with a grin.

"Guess so," Hiccup replied nervously.

"Don't look so nervous, Hiccup. You look like you're the one having the baby!" Astrid joked, as she noted his pale face.

Hiccup snorted at that. "If I was, at least you wouldn't be in so much pain," Hiccup answered quietly.

Astrid held onto his hand tighter "Hiccup, I'll be fine, I've been through it once, I know what to expect," she said gently, before she turned to look at Petrine. "You're not going to make him leave are you?" Astrid asked anxiously.

Petrine gave her a smile. "Of course I'm not," she reassured the young woman. "There's no point kicking a husband out, when he'll just find a way back in any way!" she added, with a laugh.

"A horde of angry dragons wouldn't stop me from being here," Hiccup said fiercely, as he brought Astrid's hand up his lips and kissed it lovingly. Astrid smiled at Hiccup, and touched his cheek gently, before she suddenly groaned in pain once more. Holding Hiccup's hand in her tightly, Hiccup winced, but didn't complain as his hand turned purple at the pressure. Instead he reached up and stroked Astrid's hair with his free hand.

"Deep breaths, Astrid, it'll pass," he said gently, as Petrine got to work, and checked on Astrid's progress as this contraction was happening. Straightening up, she gave the couple a wide smile.

"Already 4 centimetres dilated, dear," she said cheerfully, as the contraction passed. "You'll be halfway before you know it!"

\* \* \*

><p>It took several hours before any major headway was made, though. Astrid endured contraction after contraction, for over five hours, as the baby slowly inched its way into the world, one painful contraction after the other. By sunset, Astrid was almost nine centimetres, with contractions coming almost every minute, getting more painful each time.<p>

"I'M GOING TO BLOODY KILL YOU, HICCUP!" she screamed, as one contraction engulfed her, stronger and more painful than all the rest.

"Whatever makes you feel better, milady," Hiccup quipped. Astrid wasn't in the mood for humour though, and gave Hiccup a glare that would frighten the gods themselves.

"I'M SERIOUS HICCUP! I'M GOING TO MAKE SURE YOU \_NEVER \_DO THIS TO ME, AGAIN!"

Hiccup winced at those words, but kept the grin on his face. "Please don't, Astrid. I happen to need that part of my body."

All Hiccup got out that statement though, was a few choice words, which Hiccup hoped she would never dare repeat around their daughter. Ansfrida didn't know whether to wince or laugh at her daughter's choice of language, while Petrine looked as if she hadn't even heard it.

"Sorry about this, Petrine," Hiccup said sheepishly, before Astrid gave a glare.

"I'M NOT!"

Petrine chuckled. "I'm a midwife Hiccup; I've heard it all in the

last twenty years."

Astrid screamed as another contraction engulfed her body, and she clung onto Hiccup's arm, making Hiccup wince.

"You're nearly there, Astrid. Just hang in there," Hiccup said softly, as he held onto Astrid's hand.

"YOU TRY PUSHING A BABY OUT OF YOU AND THEN SEE HOW YOU LIKE IT!" she screamed again, as Petrine once again checked on her progress.

"You're nearly there, Astrid, a few more contractions should do it!" Petrine announced in excitement.

"You're almost there, Astrid," Hiccup said proudly, as he kissed Astrid's hand that was enclosed in his. Astrid looked at him, and seeing the love and pride in his eyes, suddenly found herself unable to retort back, before another contraction suddenly brought Astrid back to reality, and she screamed.

"WHEN IS THIS GOING TO END? I FEEL LIKE I'M SPLITTING APART!" she screamed in agony. Hiccup paled at these words, but just pulled his wife as close to him as he could.

"You're almost there, sweetheart. You can do it!" her mother said in encouragement, as she too stroked her daughter's hair.

"Your mother's right," Petrine said quickly, as she checked on Astrid's progress. "You're 10 centimetres, you're ready to push!"

Astrid's eyes widened in fear for a moment, before she remembered she'd done this all before. She had already brought Siri into this world, and she could do it again. Determination replaced fear, and as an urge to push overtook her, she grasped Hiccup's hand and pushed as hard as she could, screaming loudly.

Petrine quickly checked on the progress, only to find the baby's head was already crowning. There was no turning back now!

"I see the head, Astrid!" Petrine grinned. "Count to ten, and keep pushing, you can do it!"

Astrid did as she was told, and pushed as hard as she could, before taking a break. Petrine checked on the progress, and gave her a smile.

"The head's almost out, Astrid. Take a deep breath, and get ready to push as hard as you can," Petrine said determinedly.

Astrid nodded breathlessly, before she quickly glanced over at Hiccup. Hiccup's hands were clasped tightly around hers and his eyes were shut as he muttered something to himself. Astrid gave a wide smile, at the knowledge that he was praying to the gods for a safe delivery, before another urge to push overtook her body once more.

Bearing down, Astrid grasped Hiccup's hand tighter, as she gave out a scream. This was it, it was almost over.

"One more push, Astrid! The baby is almost out. Give me one more!" Petrine said quickly.

Astrid gathered the last of the strength she had, and pushed as hard as she could, screaming. Hiccup held his wife's hand as tightly as he could, as she bore down with all her might.

A baby's cry suddenly echoed around the room, as it slid into Petrine's waiting hands. It was all over.

"IT'S A BOY!"

Hiccup's face broke into a large smile, and Astrid's eyes filled with tears as she laid her head on Hiccup's shoulder in relief. Hiccup placed an arm around her shoulders as she did so, and pulled her closer, giving her a kiss on the forehead.

"We have a boy," Astrid said happily, as she looked up into Hiccup's eyes, which were filling with tears, as he grinned back at her.

"One of each," Hiccup said proudly, as Petrine cleaned the baby boy up, and cut the umbilical cord, before handing the still screaming baby to his mother.

The tears in Astrid's eyes began to fall, as the baby boy was placed in her waiting arms. Beside her, Hiccup sniffled, and rubbed at the tears in his eyes, as they looked upon the newborn in Astrid's arms. He was still whimpering a few minutes after his birth, but was now settling down, but neither Hiccup nor Astrid noticed, as they looked upon his face. He was perfect.

Astrid stroked the baby boy's face lovingly, as she noticed for the first time, his hair colour, and she looked at Hiccup with a laugh.

"He looks like you," Astrid said proudly, and Hiccup looked into the blanket surrounding his son for the first time, before giving a wide grin.

The baby boy had a small mop of auburn hair that stuck out at odd angles. He was a chubby little thing, but still quite small, despite being a week late. His cheeks were very pink, and his eyes at the moment a bright blue, but upon closer inspection, had a tinge of green in them, indicating his future eye colour could possibly be that of his fathers. He was absolutely perfect.

"He's perfect," Hiccup said emotionally, as the tears in his eyes began to fall. "You did amazing Astrid, I'm so proud of you." Hiccup reached up, and wiped a stray tear from his wife's cheek, before leaning his forehead on hers. "I love you," he choked out.

"I love you too," Astrid choked out, as Hiccup pulled her close to him, capturing her lips with his own, in a loving kiss. Astrid leant in and kissed him back, releasing one hand from her grip on her son, and reaching up and touching Hiccup's cheek. Both of them felt an undeniable feeling of happiness as they kissed, with a baby in between them. It was a feeling they had felt before, when Sira was born, and a feeling that would never feel old. It was a happiness they couldn't contain, and right now, the both of them felt as if

they were floating. They had two perfect children, and what was even better, was that they had one of each. As they broke off the kiss, they both smiled at each other contentedly, before Hiccup looked up at Petrine gratefully.

"We can't thank you enough, Petrine," Hiccup said earnestly as he got up and hugged the midwife appreciatively, as well as Ansfrida, who hugged her son in law back tightly.

"I didn't do anything lad, Astrid was the one who did all the work. I'm just the helper," Petrine said modestly. Hiccup shook his head with a smile, before going back over to Astrid and sitting on the bed.

Wrapping his arm around his wife's shoulders, Hiccup smiled at her. "So, have you thought of a name, yet?"

Astrid looked up from her baby's face, and gave Hiccup a wide smile. "Actually I have," she said, taking Hiccup by surprise. "What do you think of Leif?"

Hiccup looked thoughtful. "I like it..." Hiccup said slowly, "...but doesn't it mean 'heir'? How would that work when Siri's the heir?" Hiccup asked in confusion.

Astrid smiled. "It doesn't have to mean 'heir' in that sense, Hiccup," she said. "It can also just mean heir to the Haddock family name." Looking back to the baby in her arms, she grinned. "Besides, it also means 'descendent', and since he looks like you so much... What do you think?" she asked.

Nodding in acceptance, Hiccup relented. "Leif, Heir of Haddock, eh? I like it. Makes more sense than a direct heir anyway, Siri is the oldest. Leif, it is."

"Leif Hiccup Haddock," Astrid added proudly.

Hiccup snorted. "What are you trying to do to the poor kid? The name Leif is good, why did you go and put my name in?!"

"It's not that bad, Hiccup," Astrid laughed, as she took hold of his hand. "Besides, I like it," she said in determination.

Noticing that his wife wasn't going to back down, Hiccup sighed. "Alright, Leif Hiccup Haddock can be his full name."

Grinning in victory, Astrid kissed him on the cheek. "I'm glad, because I wasn't backing down anyway," she said with a grin.

Hiccup chuckled. "Yeah, I had a feeling," he said as he gently stroked Leif's cheek with a warm smile.

Astrid beamed tearfully at him, as he looked back up at her. "Do you want to hold him, now?"

Hiccup's eyes lit up. "Of course I do!"

Astrid laughed as she passed Leif to his father, who looked down at his son full of pride. Tears welled up in the young father's eyes once more, as he cradled the little boy to his chest. "He's amazing,"

Hiccup whispered proudly, making Astrid smile.

While the baby was out of Astrid's arms, it gave Petrine the chance to give her a once over. She had already safely delivered the placenta, and everything else was in order. It had been a fairly easy delivery, so Petrine saw no sense in sticking around.

"Everything's fine, Astrid," said Petrine as she packed up. "I'll come back around in the morning, and check on you, but I don't think there'll be any problems."

Astrid looked at Petrine gratefully as she went to leave. "Thank you, Petrine."

The midwife smiled as she went to walk out the door, before popping her head back in. "Would you like Toothless to come up?" she asked. "He seems a little worried."

Hiccup and Astrid laughed. They forgot Toothless would have been anxiously waiting, downstairs.

"Better send him up, before he starts to worry," Astrid said in amusement, as Petrine nodded, and went downstairs. The next minute, they heard Toothless gave a loud coo, and before long, he came rushing into the bedroom with a large toothless grin upon his face.

"Hey bud," Hiccup said cheerfully, as the dragon nervously edged closer. "I'd like you to meet Leif."

Hiccup bent down in front of the Night Fury, and gently moved part of the blanket away from the newborn's face. Toothless looked at his friend in excitement, before gently nudging his nose against the bundle. Leif gave out a frightened whine at the large figure hovering over him, and Toothless was taken aback, but showed no signs of wanting to move away. Instead, he gave the baby boy a gentle nuzzle, and after a moment, his whining ceased. Obviously the dragon wasn't so scary after all. The only thing missing in this picture now was Siri, who Ansfrida decided, needed to meet her new baby brother.

"Astrid, I'm going to get Siri," said Ansfrida while Toothless was still getting acquainted with Leif. "She needs to meet her brother, I think. We'll let everyone else meet her tomorrow." Astrid went to argue, but her mother gave her a stern look. "You need rest, sweetheart. Siri can see him, and then I'll take her for the night."

Astrid chuckled at her mother, as did Hiccup, but neither them made a move to argue. Astrid was exhausted and she needed the rest, and Hiccup wasn't going to let her exert himself after all that either.

"Alright, mum," Astrid agreed, as Ansfrida went over to kiss her daughter's cheek, and then Leif's, now back in Astrid's arms, before disappearing downstairs.

As her mother left, Astrid turned her attention back to the baby, sleeping peacefully, and gave a proud smile. No matter how much pain she'd been in that day, this baby was worth every scream and every

emotion. Giving him a kiss on the forehead, she then turned back to Hiccup.

"He's so peaceful. I wonder if we have another quiet baby on our hands," Astrid said hopefully.

"Please, don't jinx it, Astrid. I learnt that lesson the hard way," Hiccup groaned.

"Hey, you're the one who thought Siri was no trouble. I'm just being hopeful," Astrid said with a grin.

"Will you ever let me down for that?" Hiccup said, exasperated.

"Probably not," Astrid giggled. Hiccup sighed at that, but smiled once he saw Leif give out a little yawn.

"Looks like somebody has had a long day," Hiccup said with a chuckle, making Astrid snort.

"Don't know why, I'm the one that did all the work."

Hiccup opened his mouth to respond, before the two of them suddenly heard the door bang open downstairs, and they heard Siri's voice.

"Mummy, daddy!"

"We're up here, sweetie!" Astrid called out, before the little girl's footsteps could be heard as she ran across the room, and up the stairs, before she skidded to a halt at the door.

Hiccup beamed widely at the sight of his daughter, and opened his arms for her, and she ran into them, giving him a tight hug, before turning her attention to her mother. She edged closer, and looked down at the bundle of blankets in awe, as she saw her baby brother for the first time.

"Hey sweetie, I'd like you to meet Leif, your baby brother," Astrid said quietly, as she pulled the blanket back from Leif's face, revealing his auburn hair. Siri grinned in seeing that, and she turned to Hiccup behind her.

"He looks like you daddy!"

Hiccup laughed, and kissed his daughter's head. "He sure does, sweetie, just like you look like mummy."

Siri giggled, before turning back to her mother and baby brother.

"Mummy, can I hold him?' she asked shyly.

Astrid looked at Hiccup, who gave a nod of agreement. Siri was almost six, she could do this.

"Yes you can, sweetie. Go over to the rocking chair, and you can have a hold," Astrid said, as she passed Leif over to Hiccup, as Siri nodded excitedly and raced to the rocking chair. Making sure she was

sitting up, Hiccup gently passed Leif to Siri's waiting arms.

Siri's eyes widened in fear for a moment as Leif gave a small whine, before he once again settled down, making the little girl sigh in relief.

"Don't worry, sweetheart, he did that with Toothless too, he's just getting to know you," Hiccup said reassuringly, as he bent down in front of his daughter as she rocked the newborn. Siri's eyes were wide in excitement as she watched her baby brother sleep in her arms.

"So, what do you think of your new baby brother, Seer?" Astrid asked her.

Siri looked up at her parents with a proud smile. "I have the cutest baby brother in the world!"

\* \* \*

><p><em>It's a boy! See I told you none of you would be disappointed didn't I? I knew many of you wanted the baby to be a boy, and I had it planned to be all along! <em>

\_For anyone confused on the pronunciation of Leif's name, the 'ei' in Leif is pronounced as the 'ay' in 'lay'. For anyone thinking it was pronounced as 'Leaf', don't worry I thought that too, until my mum corrected me! Either way, I hope you like the name. I originally chose it because of it meaning 'heir', but I decided that it was unfair on Siri as the oldest to be passed over for the role as Chief just because she's a girl (speaking as a girl myself), despite the time period. I always imagined that Hiccup would have changed the succession laws for his daughter's sake anyway, especially if they never had anymore kids. KateMarie999 also agreed with me that it was only fair as well, for it to be Siri. I was just lucky heir can mean other things, and that it also means descendent :)\_

\_Alright, next chapter will take place the night after this chapter. Leif will show just what type of baby he is to his parents too. A loud one! I will try to post it next Friday as usual.\_

\_Don't forget to review! :D You guys have all been great! Once again, remember NO FLAMES, but KIND constructive criticism is fine.

-

\_Thanks for reading!\_

## 14. Chapter 14: Up All Night

\_Well this chapter turned out better than I expected! When I first started, I wasn't a fan of it, and was thinking of scrapping the idea. Lucky for me though, I have a good friend in KateMarie999, who offered to read what I had so far for me, and didn't mind it, so she encouraged me to continue :) Now I like the chapter! I guess I just needed to write the rest :D\_

\_This chapter takes place the night after Leif's birth. It's only short, and may seem like a filler chapter, but I can assure you it's not. It's all leading to my next plotline which will span for 3



chapters, and will be my first dramatic plotline, involving Siri. I'm not saying anymore, but I can say I threw out some very subtle hints as to what is going to happen in this chapter, that most of you may not even pick up, so don't worry!\_

\_I also added in the story that Valka was talking about in this chapter, from chapter 11. Although many of you have read my fanfic 'Babysitting Nightmare'', I decided to put it in for you all when Siri asks about it again :)\_

\_I hope you all like the chapter!\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 14: Up All Night<span>

\* \* \*

><p>"WAHHHHH!"<p>

Hiccup was startled awake, for what felt like the hundredth time that night. Beside him, Astrid groaned and buried her head into her pillow, trying to drown out the screams of their newborn son. It may have only been a day since their baby boy had come into the world, but he had already shown what type of baby he was going to be to his devoted parents; a loud one.

After a quiet night following his birth, Leif had now shown just how different he would be from his sister. Whereas Siri had been a quiet and routine awakener, Leif was loud and spontaneous. At 3am, Leif had already succeeded in waking his parents five times, and each time he would not just cry, but \_scream\_. Whether he wanted a feed, a diaper change, comfort or just attention, the baby boy wasn't failing in his efforts to keep his parents up, and it was beginning to show.

"What's this kid got against us?" Hiccup groaned, as Leif continued to scream.

"I don't know, but it's your turn," Astrid mumbled in reply, pulling the covers over her head in an effort to drown out the noise.

Sighing, Hiccup wearily sat up, hoping all the while his son would go back to sleep. When he didn't, Hiccup groaned and begrudgingly stood up, before padding over to the cradle, where Leif continued to scream.

"Oh, come on now, it can't be all that bad can it?" Hiccup said softly, as he gently picked the newborn up, cradling him close to his chest. Leif's screams didn't falter, and the young father wondered what in Thor's name could possibly be wrong this time.

"Oh, come on buddy, work with me here" Hiccup pleaded as he gently rocked the baby in his arms. "What's the matter?"

Toothless looked up from his rock bed as his rider continued to rock the infant. When the screams only grew louder though, he gave out an irritated growl, before burying his head into his wings to drown out the noise.

"You too, bud?" Hiccup asked his dragon sympathetically, and Toothless opened one eye, before closing it again, ignoring his friend. He wanted sleep too!

Hiccup sighed, before turning his attention back to the distressed child in his arms. Astrid had only just fed the baby boy an hour before, and he didn't feel wet, so what was wrong this time was beyond the young Chief. Seeing her husband wasn't making any progress in quietening their son down, Astrid got up to join the two of them. Surely their son wanted something.

"He's not hungry again, is he?" Astrid asked, holding out her arms. Hiccup sighed, and gently passed Leif over to her, before she went over the rocking chair. Sitting down in it, Astrid tried to see if her son would take some milk, but he refused, turning his head away, before continuing to whine.

"Well, he obviously isn't hungry," Astrid sighed, as she cradled her son tightly, and began to rock him. This trick had worked wonders for Siri, and as she rocked the baby in her arms, there was a slight lull in the infant's cries. Thinking she had found the answer, Astrid continued to rock her son, watching as his eyelids began to slide closed, before he suddenly opened them again, and continued his tirade.

Hiccup sighed in disappointment. "Well, it almost worked," Hiccup pointed out, as Astrid got up and began to pace around with Leif close to her chest, bouncing the baby up and down. Her attempts were working out as well as Hiccup's.

"Oh come on, sweetie, what's wrong?" Astrid asked anxiously, as she held the infant close to her. "You don't need changing do you?" Taking the little boy to the changing table, Astrid carefully undid the ties on his diaper, and her eyes widened.

"No wonder you're upset, sweetie. You hid a loaded diaper on us!" Astrid exclaimed with a laugh, as she turned to Hiccup with a grin on her face. "Pass me a spare diaper will you, our little warrior here hid a loaded one on us!"

Hiccup snorted with laughter, and passed another diaper over to Astrid, who quickly changed the infant, before throwing the soiled diaper into the dirty clothes bucket in the room with a revolted look upon her face. It was no wonder her little boy had been so cranky!

Turning her attention back to the infant, Astrid was taken aback to see that he still wasn't settling down. Despite changing his diaper, the baby continued to cry, baffling the two parents, as they worked to find out what was still bothering their little boy.

"Ssh..." Astrid hushed the newborn. "It's alright, sweetie, it's alright." Moving Leif into a different position, she continued to rock him gently. "Oh Leif, what's wrong? I've changed you, you don't need to be so upset," she said anxiously, as she turned to Hiccup, who looked back, as baffled as she was.

"He's not sick is he?" Hiccup asked her worriedly, and Astrid put her hand up to the baby's head, before shaking her head.

"He's not sick," Astrid said, resulting in a thankful sigh from Hiccup. "He's just being stubborn," Astrid added, as she walked around, bouncing him up and down, which led to little effect.

"Wonder where he gets that from?" Hiccup chuckled, under his breath.

"Not the time, Hiccup," Astrid said irritably, without turning around, and Hiccup chuckled sheepishly.

"Sorry, Astrid."

Astrid sighed as Leif increased in volume at that point, and she turned back to Hiccup with a look of desperation upon her face. "Would you mind?" she asked desperately, and Hiccup nodded and held out his arms to his wife, who passed the caterwauling infant over to him.

"Come on buddy, work with us here," Hiccup said gently as he bounced the baby up and down.

Seeing no progress happening with the little human, Toothless stood up from his rock bed and wondered over to the pair. Hiccup smiled at his dragon, and he bent down in front of his friend in order for him to see the baby better.

Toothless gently sniffed at the baby, and gave him his signature toothless smile, trying to calm him down. It used to work all the time with Siri when she got like this, and Hiccup decided it was worth a shot. What none of them expected though, was for the baby boy to start screaming even louder.

"So much for that idea!" Astrid said loudly over the noise before Toothless looked at the two of them guiltily.

"It's alright, bud, you tried," Hiccup said reassuringly to the Night Fury, continued to look at the two humans guiltily as he sauntered back over to his rock bed.

Turning back to the screaming baby, Hiccup looked at Astrid with an awkward grin. "You know what this reminds me of?" he asked, moving Leif into a different position. "Siri, when one of us left the house."

Astrid groaned. "Great, I really did jinx us." Looking at the baby, she sighed. "What are we going to do, then?" she asked, perplexed. "The rocking chair isn't working with Leif, like it did with Siri."

"What worked with me?" came a sleepy voice from behind them.

Hiccup and Astrid turned around to find Siri, looking worn out, in the doorway. Her hair was tangled and sticking up in odd places, bags were under her eyes, and as they looked at her, she gave a great yawn, as she entered the room.

"Oh, sweetie, did Leif wake you up?" Astrid asked sympathetically, as she bent down, and enveloped the 5 year old in her arms. Siri rested

her head on her mother's shoulder, as she gave a nod, before turning her attention to her father and her baby brother in his arms.

"Why is Leif so sad, daddy?" Siri asked worriedly, as she walked over to her father, and stood up on tip toe to look at her baby brother's face.

Hiccup smiled at his daughter. "We don't know, sweetie," Hiccup confessed. "He needed a diaper change, but we've done that, and he's still crying," Hiccup sat on the bed, so Siri could see her brother properly. "Even Toothless tried to help."

Hearing his name, the dragon looked over at Siri, giving her a sad look. Siri looked at her daddy in confusion, and Hiccup gave out a small chuckle, before translating. "It didn't end well, he made Leif worse"

Siri looked at Toothless with a small smile. "It's ok Toothless, you tried!" Siri said kindly, as she went over to him and gave him a hug around his neck. Toothless gave the little girl a grateful grin, before nudging up to her appreciatively, before she went back over to the bed.

"Can I try, daddy?" Siri suggested as she looked down at her baby brother, who was still whimpering loudly, but thankfully no longer screaming.

"I really don't know if there's anything you could do, sweetheart," Hiccup said gently. "Mummy and I have tried everything we can think of."

"Let her try Hiccup, we've got nothing to lose," Astrid said willingly, and Hiccup looked at her, and back at his daughter, who gave her father a pleading look, her arms outstretched. Sighing, Hiccup gave in.

"Alright, go over to the rocking chair, Seer," Hiccup said as he stood up. Siri nodded, before going over to the rocking chair, and sitting in it, before Hiccup went over and gently placed the newborn into his big sister's arms, still whimpering loudly.

Siri looked down at her brother, and gave him a small smile. "Come on Leifey, mummy and daddy are sleepy," she said with a giggle. "Don't cry."

Leif continued to whimper though, and Siri frowned thoughtfully. Hiccup looked at Astrid, his eyes asking the unspoken question of where this was leading. Astrid looked at him with a smile, putting her hand on his arm.

"Give her a chance," she said quietly.

Siri's eyes suddenly lit up, and she looked back at the baby cuddled up in her arms, and suddenly made a funny face at him. "Come on Leif, look at your big sister," she giggled, as she continued to make funny faces at the one day old baby, as she rocked the chair back and forth.

Hiccup was about to intervene, to say it wasn't working, when to both his and Astrid's surprise, Leif suddenly quietened down. Astonished,

the couple went over to the pair and looked down at their son's face, to see him looking up at his big sister in wonder. He had stopped crying, and was no longer whimpering at all, and as Siri continued to rock him, his eyelids began to close. After a few minutes, Leif was once again asleep, taking everyone in the room by surprise.

"Well, what do you know?" Hiccup said in astonishment. "Siri, you have a magic touch."

Siri looked up at her daddy in surprise, and Astrid nodded in agreement with her husband.

"See, we always said you would be a brilliant big sister, and now you've proved it," Astrid said proudly. "You calmed him down when we couldn't, we are so proud of you." Astrid bent down, and gave her daughter a kiss on the forehead, and she beamed happily at them.

"I just made funny faces, mummy," she said modestly, and Hiccup bent down, and gave his daughter a kiss on the cheek, giving her a small smile.

"It was obviously funny faces from his big sister that he wanted, sweetie," Hiccup said, with pride evident in his voice.

Siri looked up at her parents with a small smile, before turning her attention back to the sleeping baby in her arms. Leif was finally settled again.

"We better get him back to bed," Hiccup said quietly, as he carefully took the infant out of Siri's arms, holding his breath as he hoped the baby wouldn't wake up. To his relief, he didn't, and he gently gave the baby boy a gentle kiss on the forehead as he placed him back in the cradle, and covered him with a blanket. Sighing in relief, he turned back to Astrid, who looked relieved.

"He looks so peaceful now," Astrid noted, as she gently stroked his hair. "I love him, but what a stubborn little thing he is!" she said with a quiet laugh, as she looked at Hiccup, who gave a grin.

"Runs in the family," Hiccup said with a look at a yawning Siri.

The look wasn't missed by Siri though, who looked back at her parents with a look of bewilderment on her face. "What runs in the family, daddy?" she asked. "What did you say worked with me too, when I came in?"

"It's late, sweetie, don't you want to go to bed?" Hiccup asked hopefully. He didn't really want to tell that story, that's for sure, especially at 3am in the morning! To his disappointment though, Siri giggled, and shook her head.

"I wanna know, daddy!" she said with a grin.

Hiccup sighed, and Astrid laughed. "You did promise to tell her, one day," Astrid grinned. "Come on, tell her, it's funny," she prompted.

"For you it was," Hiccup said dryly, but he too gave a laugh, and gestured for his daughter to scoot over on the chair. Siri stood up, and as Hiccup sat down, she crawled into his lap on the rocking

chair, laying her head on his chest, before Hiccup wrapped his arms around her waist.

"Well, do you remember when we told you, you were a very quiet baby?" Hiccup asked her.

"Yes. You said I was a good little girl," Siri said proudly, as she looked at her father with a smile.

"Well, that's not entirely true," Hiccup said with a chuckle. "You were quiet, but only when both of us were at home with you."

Siri's eyes widened. "What did I \_do\_?" she asked inquisitively.

"You screamed," Astrid said simply. "Apparently you didn't like only one of us being home."

"Aww," Siri said with a giggle.

Astrid snorted. "Yeah, it sounds cute now, sweetie. At the time it wasn't though," Astrid said. "Unlike Leif though, the rocking chair calmed you down and it was the only thing that did. After a few days, I got used to your screaming, and could calm you down until daddy came home." Looking at Hiccup, she suddenly grinned, and Hiccup groaned, knowing what she was about to say.

Siri didn't though, and noticing the exchange between her parents though, she frowned in bewilderment. "Why is daddy embarrassed, mummy?" she asked, confused.

"Because mummy didn't tell me what you were like when one of us wasn't home," Hiccup said with a chuckle. "Then one day I offered to look after you, when mummy went out."

Siri eyes widened again, and she looked at her mother, as she was trying to hold back a laugh. "Mummy, you didn't?!" Siri said with a giggle.

Astrid burst into fits of laughter, while Hiccup just turned redder at the conversation. "I did, sweetie. I went out, and didn't tell daddy what to expect!" she laughed.

"Why?" Siri asked in wonder.

"Because I made the silly mistake of saying to your mother, you were easy to look after," Hiccup sighed, before he gave a grin to his daughter. "Let's just say, I soon learnt never to say that again."

Siri burst into fits of laughter alongside her mother. "What did I do, daddy?!" she said through giggles.

"Oh, sweetie, what didn't you do?" Hiccup said with a fake sigh, making her and Astrid laugh even harder. Lucky for them, their laughter wasn't too loud, or else Leif would have just woken up again. Thankfully, he was still dozing away, as his mother and sister tried to contain their laughter. Siri was the first, and she looked up at her father, with a large grin plastered on her face.

"What happened, daddy?" she begged. Hiccup chuckled at his daughter's eagerness, before he continued.

"Well, for the first few minutes, you were quiet," Hiccup said. "Then, the next moment, you had me falling out of a chair, when you started screaming, just like Leif was earlier." Siri looked over at her baby brother with a giggle, before looking back at Hiccup. "I had no idea what was going on! I knew you weren't hungry, as mummy had just fed you before she left, and I checked \_everything \_I could think of. Your diaper, if you had a fever, if anything scared you, the lot, and \_still \_you kept screaming," Hiccup said in amazement.

Siri looked at her daddy, and gave him a sheepish smile. "I'm sorry I did that, daddy," she said sweetly, and Hiccup looked down at her with a smile.

"It wasn't your fault, sweetie. You obviously didn't like both of us not being with you," Hiccup said as he kissed her blonde locks lovingly. "I just wish I'd been warned." Hiccup looked at Astrid with a grin, who gave a chuckle.

"Hey, you said she was easy," Astrid shrugged, and Hiccup laughed once more.

"Did I stop screaming, daddy?" Siri asked hopefully.

"Well, not for awhile. Toothless tried to calm you down at one stage." Turning towards the Night Fury, Hiccup shook his head with a smile, as he saw the dragon was either ignoring him, or asleep once more. "That didn't work, and then finally I tried the rocking chair out myself, and guess what?" Hiccup asked his little girl with a grin.

"It worked?" Siri guessed with a giggle.

"It worked alright. It took an hour, but it finally worked," Hiccup said in relief, as he remembered that day. "That's why Grandma wanted me to tell you the story. It proves I'm far from perfect too, sweetie. It took me an hour to calm my baby girl down!" Hiccup said as Siri smiled up at him sleepily. "Plus, no one has let me down for it since then," Hiccup added with a grin.

Siri laughed once more. "Did mummy let you down for it, daddy?"

"Nope, I haven't either, Seer," Astrid said with a grin.

"I have a chance to get mummy back now through, Siri. Guess who said Leif was quiet last night?" Hiccup said with a grin. Siri giggled and looked at her mother, who was now the one blushing.

"I didn't say he was, only that I hoped so!" Astrid argued.

"Sure, mummy," Siri giggled quietly, as she cuddled up against her father, her eyelids drooping once more.

"Thanks, baby," Astrid said sarcastically, before she looked at Hiccup with a laugh.

"I think you've rubbed off on her, Hiccup," she said, in a false accusing tone. Hiccup shrugged, and beamed back at his wife.

"I have no idea what you're talking about. What do you say Siri?" Hiccup asked his daughter. Siri didn't respond though, and as Hiccup looked down at his daughter's face, he smiled warmly as he saw that she had drifted back off to sleep. She was cuddled up against him, using his chest as a pillow, her mouth slightly hanging open. She wasn't waking back up anytime soon. Hiccup stroked his little girl's hair, before giving her a gentle kiss on the forehead.

"I better take her back to bed," Hiccup said quietly, as he gently stood up, holding Siri tightly in his arms. Siri barely even stirred at the movement, and Astrid smiled at her sleeping daughter, before giving her a kiss against her blonde locks, careful not to wake her up.

Hiccup carefully shifted the 5 year old in his arms, before taking her back to her room. Midnight looked up as her friend was carried back into the room, and Hiccup placed the little girl back into her bed, pulling the covers back over her. Siri barely even stirred, as he did this, and Hiccup placed a gentle kiss on her temple, gave the Terrible Terror a pat on the head, before quietly heading back to his own room.

When he got back to his and Astrid's room, he saw that she had already collapsed back into bed, and was already asleep once more. Not wanting to wake her up, Hiccup went over to the cradle to check on Leif, and smiled as he saw him still sleeping peacefully. Fixing the infants blankets up, Hiccup crawled back into bed beside Astrid, and buried himself once more under the covers.

Hiccup was just beginning to drift off again, when-

"WAHHH!"

"Oh, not again!"

\* \* \*

><p><em>Yep, Leif is going to a screamer lol. At least Siri knew what to do though!<em>

\_Alright, as I said earlier, this chapter is not a filler, and is vital to the next 3 chapters. Anyone who picked up the hints, kudos to you! If not, don't worry, you'll soon find out. The next 3 chapters are based around Siri, and her feelings towards all the changes that have been occurring since Leif's birth, and it takes place 3 months after he's born. It's going to get a little dramatic, but I'm not giving anything away, except Siri will be very jealous. It won't be too bad though, I promise, I'm not a drama writer!  
:p\_

\_Anyway, don't forget to review! For some reason, my reviews went down dramatically last chapter, from 14 to 6! I'm not sure why, when it was the chapter you'd all been wanting, but I'm not complaining, just surprised lol. I'm sure I may have just posted at the wrong time or something :) Or life is busy at the moment, either one. I wouldn't mind knowing what you think of the new addition to the family though! Just remember, NO FLAMES, but KIND constructive criticism is



accepted.\_

\_Thanks for reading! :D My next chapter will be up as soon as possible!\_

## 15. Chapter 15: Jealousy

\_I want to thank everyone who gave me ideas for my upcoming chapter in the reviews. Although many of them were vey simple, it was what I wanted, and thanks to them, I have managed to decide on an idea for it, so thanks everyone! :)\_

\_Alright, this chapter is my first time tackling a drama storyline, so I'm a little iffy on the final product. I don't think this chapter is too bad for my first go at drama, but I hope its alright. This plotline will go for 3 chapters, and is about Siri's reaction to the changes her brother has brought. Some parts in this chapter are quite emotional I think, as I even teared up writing it! All in all though, I hope its a good job, but please remember this is my first go at drama :) This isn't the family fluff you're all used too though, so be prepared.\_

\_Anyway, on with the chapter! :D\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 15: Jealousy<span>

\* \* \*

><p>"WAHHHH!"<p>

"Oh, Leif!"

Siri sighed as she watched her mother get up to tend to her brother; again. The six year old couldn't remember the last time her reading lesson \_hadn't \_been interrupted by a cry from her baby brother, but if Siri was being honest, it was starting to get annoying. Ever since Leif was born, three months before, Siri's time with her parents had slowly started to get less and less, due to the fact that Leif \_always \_cried. He cried when he was hungry, he cried when he was wet, and half the time, he cried for no reason at all!

Siri had used to love her morning reading lesson with her mother, as she always had her mother's undivided attention, but ever since Leif arrived, they couldn't get through half an hour without him ruining things. Siri loved her baby brother, don't get the little girl wrong, but these days he got \_all\_ the attention, leaving Siri to entertain herself. Before Leif was born, Siri would get all the attention she needed, and her parents always had time for her, but these days, it was lucky if the young girl got an interrupted reading lesson, let alone a couple of hours with her mum and dad.

Sometimes, Siri wondered if her brother did this on purpose. For the first couple of weeks after he was born, Siri was easily able to calm her sibling down, and make her parents proud. After a few weeks though, this changed, and Leif no longer responded to his sister's attempts in calming him down. Now, he just cried and cried, until he was tired, keeping his parents busy at all hours of the day. It was

because of this, that Siri wondered why she had ever wanted a sibling in the first place. Leif was nothing but trouble, and it was because of him, the little girl never got any attention anymore. She may have loved her brother, but the six year old had to admit, she sometimes wished he wasn't around, which in turn made her feel incredibly guilty. Why did little brothers have ruin everything?!, she thought.

"Siri?"

Siri was snapped out of her reverie when she heard her mother's voice from upstairs. Looking up at the balcony, she saw her mother looking down at her with a look of guilt etched on her face.

"I'm sorry, sweetie, but Leif isn't feeling very well," Astrid explained sheepishly. Siri sighed, she knew what was coming. "Do you think we could have the lesson later?"

There it was. Once again, her brother had managed to ruin her time with her mother. What else was new? It wasn't like he never did this, Siri noted sadly. She was beginning to think her brother did plan this.

"Fine," Siri said, with a hint of annoyance in her voice. "Can I go over to Lennart's then?" she asked, looking up at her mother with a frown.

"If that's what you want," Astrid said sadly, as she detected the frustration in her daughter's tone.

Siri shrugged silently, and went to stand up. Before she made a move to leave though, her mother spoke up again.

"Seer?"

Siri looked back up at her mother in irritation, but her face softened as she saw the look of shame on her mother's face.

"Yeah, mummy?"

"I really am sorry, baby," Astrid said gently. "I know Leif can interrupt at the worst times."

Siri sighed sadly. "I know mummy," she said quietly, gesturing to Midnight nearby, before walking out the door without another word.

Astrid stood there taken aback for a moment. She knew Siri was upset at the moment, but it wasn't like her to walk out like that. For a moment she considered going after her daughter, and giving her a hug, and a kiss, when Leif's cries interrupted her thoughts.

"I'm coming sweetie, I'm coming!"

\* \* \*

><p>As soon as Siri left the house, she made a beeline straight for Lennart's house, kicking any rocks and pebbles she could find in her way. Once again, her brother had ruined the time she had with her mother. Why did he always have to do that! Heading towards Lennart's

house though, she managed a small smile. Her Auntie Anna always knew how to make her feel better lately when Leif was annoying her, and it was who she wanted to talk to at the moment. Having Lennart to play with was a great advantage too of course, and he always knew how to cheer her up; he had a little brother too, and knew how it felt.<p>

Upon reaching the house, the girl raised her fist and gently knocked on the door, hoping that her friend was home. Luckily for her, the door was answered just moments later, by Anna of all people, who smiled warmly as she saw the little girl.

"Siri! What are you doing here so early?" Anna said brightly as she looked down at the young girl.

Siri's smile slipped off her face, and she looked down at the ground. "Leif is sick. Mummy couldn't finish my lesson," she said quietly.

Anna's smile turned sympathetic as she looked down at the six year old. She knew how difficult it was living with the 3 month old, for the little girl, and how much less time Hiccup and Astrid had with her. She knew it wasn't their fault, Leif was so young, and she had two children of her own, she knew what it was like. That didn't make it any less hard for Siri though, who was still trying to adjust to the changes that the baby boy had brought.

"I see," Anna said gently as she bent down in front of the girl. "Siri, does your mummy know you're here?"

Siri nodded without looking up. "Yes, mummy told me I could come over," she said quietly.

Anna bent down in front of the girl, and gave her a small smile. "Seer, I was just giving Lennart his reading lesson for the day. Do you want to join in?" she offered.

Siri looked up at the young woman with a joyful smile. "Yes, I'd love too!" she exclaimed eagerly.

Anna gave a laugh, and held out her hand for Siri to take. "Alright, but you're probably further ahead than Len is, so be patient, OK?"

Siri nodded, as she went inside with Anna. Sitting facing away from the door at a table in the middle of the room was Lennart, face buried in a book. Hearing his mother's footsteps returning, Lennart looked around and his eyes brightened as he saw Siri walking alongside his mother.

"Hey, Siri! What are you doing here?" the boy said happily, as they approached.

Before Siri could respond, Anna interjected. "Don't bother her, Len. Her reading lesson just got cancelled, that's all," his mother explained gently.

Lennart frowned as he looked at his friend's miserable expression. "Why?" he asked, bewildered.

"Lennart, you don't need to know why, just know that Siri will be joining our lesson for the day," Anna said firmly.

"Leif is sick, Lennie," Siri stated quietly as she sat down beside him, and Lennart's eyes widened in understanding. He knew exactly why she was there now. Every time the young Viking had been over at the Haddock household lately, he hadn't been over there for long. Lennart may have only been 5 years old, but even he knew the trouble the infant was causing, especially for Siri. Siri was over at his house more times than he could count lately, which to be honest wasn't very high, and each time she had a sad look on her face that Lennart knew well. He felt the same way when his brother was born.

"Oh. Are you OK?" Lennart asked kindly, as he wrapped his arms around the girl in a friendly embrace. A round of giggles emitted from the girl, as she returned the hug. How could she be sad when her friend was always there to make her feel better!

"I think someone is trying to get out of his reading lesson," Anna joked, as Lennart let go of Siri, giving her a reassured smile. "Come on kiddo, time to get back to it. You too, Siri," she said with a chuckle, as she placed the book in front of the two kids. Siri was further ahead in her studies than the 5 year old, but she listened and worked patiently through the reading lesson, before Anna gave her an extra page to read. Siri was grateful for the lesson, as for that one hour, her mind was off her annoying little brother, and she didn't have to worry about a baby interrupting them every few minutes!

Siri would have loved for the lesson to continue, but after an hour, Lennart started to lose focus, and Anna had to end it there. As Lennart took off to go play, Siri kept her nose in the book, trying to keep her mind off her brother. Noticing where the little girl's mind was at, Anna placed an arm around her shoulders, making Siri look up at her face with a dejected expression.

"Is there something more going on than just Leif annoying you, sweetie?" Anna asked gently, as she noticed Siri's mood was lower than she'd seen it, even recently. When Siri didn't answer though, Anna gestured to the couch in the middle of the room, and Siri followed her, before sitting down beside her, her eyes locked on the ground.

"Siri, you don't have to tell me, if you don't want too," Anna said quietly. "But if you want to tell me what's going on, I promise it will stay between us." Placing an arm around the six year old's shoulders, Siri looked up at her, with a look of surprise. Nobody had ever promised that before. She knew Anna well enough to know that she would never break her word, so sighing; the little girl opened up, in the hopes Anna would be able to help.

"Leif's ruining everything," Siri confessed quietly, as she looked down at the floor guiltily, worried about how Anna may react to her saying that. Anna had two children of her own, and was close friends with her parents, so Siri was worried on how she may respond to what she was confiding in her.

Siri needn't have worried though, for a moment later, Anna pulled the little girl into a warm one armed hug, and when Siri looked up, she was taken aback at the look of understanding on the young woman's

face.

"Why is Leif ruining everything, Siri?" she asked her patiently. Anna could tell Siri was afraid of confiding how she felt to her, but she wasn't about to judge the girl on how she felt. She was only six years old, and needed support, not judgement.

Siri opened her mouth to respond, before closing it once more\_, \_unsure on how to explain. As Anna continued to look into Siri's face with her kind, understanding eyes though, the little girl's eyes filled with tears.

"Ssh..."Anna hushed the girl gently, as she pulled her closer to her. "It's OK Siri, you can tell me. Why is Leif ruining everything? Is it because he gets more attention? Or that he cries all the time? You can tell me, I won't be angry. I'm not your mother, and I highly doubt Astrid would be angry either," Anna said gently.

Siri sniffed, and wiped at the tears in her eyes, before speaking. "It's just that...Leif \_always \_cries, and when he starts, he doesn't stop," Siri said. "He always gets in the way now. I haven't had a reading lesson with mummy without him crying since he was born, or any time with mummy and daddy in ages. Every time they try to, he cries, and then \_he \_gets the attention." As the girl spoke, the tears in her eyes began to fall down her cheeks like a waterfall, which no amount of wiping them away could stop them. "I used to be able to calm him down, Aunt Anna, but now, he just cries at me too. Mummy and daddy spend more time with him than me, and I never get to be with them anymore." Siri's voice started to crack as she spoke, and Anna's heart broke as the child continued to speak. "I haven't been to the cove with daddy since Leif arrived, and mummy never takes me axe throwing, and I barely get to spend time with Leif without him screaming at me!"

Siri finally burst into tears as she spoke, and she buried her head in Anna's side, sobbing her heart out. Anna was struggling to blink back tears herself at how miserable the little girl was. She knew it wasn't Hiccup and Astrid's fault. They tried so hard to balance their kids, but Leif was such a handful, it was a miracle the little girl had held out this long. Anna pulled the young child into a tight embrace as she cried, hushing her gently. Siri may not be her daughter, but she was still close to her, considering her friendship with her son, and seeing her like this, broke her heart. Anna knew the best course of action right now was to hold and comfort the child until she calmed down, having experienced this with her own son when Sigmund was born. The two situations had been remarkably similar.

That was it! The young woman knew exactly how to help the little girl as she thought of that. She had gone through the same experience with Lennart, so therefore, she could use the same advice. Why hadn't she thought about this before?!

"Siri, do you want some advice, sweetheart?" Anna asked her softly, as the young girl finally looked up, her eyes red and puffy, and her face red. Sniffing, the little girl nodded, and Anna gave her a warm smile.

"Seer, did Lennart ever tell you how he felt when Sigmund was born?" Anna asked her.

Siri nodded. "Lennie was sad because Sig cried all the time too, didn't he?" Siri said, which Anna responded with a nod.

"Yes he did. Sigmund was just like Leif for awhile too, and Lennart felt the same way as you. He was angry at us for spending all our time with Sigmund, even though we didn't mean to, and he felt left out," Anna explained kindly. At these words, Siri's eyes widened as she looked up at her. She never knew Lennart had felt this way. He'd never told her anything except that he was sad. Anna gave her a smile as she saw the look of surprise in her eyes. "You're not the only child who feels like this when a brother or sister comes along, sweetie, and you won't be the last. I know Leif is quite a handful-"

Siri scowled, and crossed her arms in a huff. "He's an attention hog," Siri said bitterly, before blushing and looking away guiltily. She hated feeling like this about her brother, and didn't like talking about him in this way either, so why did she say that?

Anna wasn't fazed though, and she actually gave out a low chuckle of amusement. She knew Siri didn't mean to feel like this, and she wasn't going to make her feel bad for it. "Maybe it seems like he is sweetie, but he's just a baby. He's doing what babies do naturally, which is to cry," Anna said.

"But he always cries! And he cries every time mummy or daddy are doing something with me! Are you sure he doesn't do it on purpose?" Siri huffed.

"I know it may seem like Siri, but it's just a very annoying coincidence. Leif's too young to realise what he's doing," Anna explained calmly. "What do you do when he cries now?" she asked.

Siri looked at Anna in confusion. "What do you mean?"

"I mean, do you help with him now, or do you leave your parents to do it?" Anna explained.

Siri frowned. "I can't help anymore, though. Leif doesn't listen to me now, and mummy and daddy never ask me anymore," Siri said sadly, as she twisted her long, blonde plait around in her hands, a habit she did when she was upset or nervous.

"Just because they don't ask doesn't mean you still can't help," Anna said with a smile. "I never asked Lennart either, but he still tried, and before long, I suggested he did; and you know what?"

"What?" Siri asked curiously.

"Sigmund began to like having his big brother around to help. He even began to stop crying after that. Maybe Leif will too, if you give him a chance. That way you're helping, and spending time with your parents. You never know, maybe Leif will grow out of his crying phase soon," Anna said optimistically.

Siri's eyes brightened at this advice, and she found herself flinging her arms around Anna's waist and giving her a tight hug. "Thank you Aunt Anna," she said joyfully, making Anna smile. This is the Siri

she was used too.

"Now remember, Siri, this won't work straight away, it'll take time. Just be patient with your mummy and daddy for now, huh? They love you so much, and they're trying their best, I'm sure," Anna told the girl softly.

Siri nodded. "I know," she said quietly.

"Siwi!"

Siri looked up, and giggled as she saw 1 year old Sigmund waddle over to her, unsteady on his legs, Lennart behind him trying to make sure he didn't fall. Siri giggled. If Lennart could be this close to his brother now, after a rough start, why couldn't she try with Leif? Maybe Anna was right. She just needed to help more. She was a big sister after all, and big sisters helped!

"You wanna play with us, Siri?" Lennart asked her brightly, and Siri nodded, before getting up. Lennart grinned mischievously at her, before he suddenly tagged her. Siri squealed in delight and chased after him, around the house, Sigmund trying his best to keep the pace with his big brother, while Anna watched on with a laugh. It was good to see Siri feeling better, for now.

As the two kids chased each other around the room, the door opened, to reveal Snotlout. He immediately stopped once he walked inside, not expecting to see Siri there. He had just come from a council meeting, and Hiccup had told him Siri was at home that day. Looking at his wife, he looked at her with the unspoken question of why she was there, and she gave a small smile, and mouthed the word 'Leif'. That was all the explanation the young man needed, and he looked back at the two kids, just as they realised he was there.

"Hey, daddy!" Lennart exclaimed excitedly as he ran over to him, giving him a hug, which Snotlout responded to with a smile.

"Hey, champ," Snotlout said with a grin, before he turned to Siri. "Hey Siri, didn't expect to see you here," he said gently. He knew it was best not to talk about Leif if that was why she was here.

"Hi Uncle Snotlout," Siri said brightly. "Has my daddy gone home?"

"He was going to soon, Seer. He just needed to finish up some stuff," Snotlout confirmed.

Siri turned to Anna. "I think I better go home. Mummy might be worried."

Anna stood up and embraced the girl with a gentle hug. "Alright, sweetie. Now, just remember what I told you, just try to help out whether Leif wants it or not. You're always welcome here if you want to talk though, alright?" Anna said kindly, to which Siri nodded, before saying goodbye to Lennart and Sigmund.

"You okay to go home on your own?" Snotlout asked her.

Siri giggled. "I know my way home, Uncle Snotlout!"

Snotlout chuckled. "Yeah, I guess you do."

Siri smiled, before gesturing to Midnight who had been asleep on the floor this whole time. Waving goodbye to the family, the young girl began to trudge through the thin layer of early season snow outside the house, making her way up to her place. She had been grateful for the distraction and the advice she'd been given that day, but now it was time to put it to good use, for as soon as she walked up to the door, she heard it; Leif's cries.

Siri sighed. She'd been out most of the day, and her brother was still crying. Didn't he ever stop? She thought. Walking through the door, the first thing she noticed was her mother, looking completely worn out, and frustrated, bouncing the infant in her arms as she walked across the room. Upon hearing the door open, though, her mother looked up and her face brightened upon seeing her daughter in the doorway.

"Hey, sweetheart, how was it at Lennart's?" Astrid asked her with a smile, carefully shifted the 3 month old in her arms, as he continued to scream.

Siri smiled. "Good, mummy. Aunty Anna gave me my reading lesson with Lennie for the day."

Astrid's smile faded slightly. Had it really come to the point when her friend had to give her daughter, her reading lesson? Feeling guilty, Astrid opened her mouth to apologise to her little girl, when Siri suddenly beamed. Frowning in confusion, Astrid's eyes suddenly widened as the young girl suddenly walked over to her, and reached up to take Leif out of arms.

"Let me help with Leif, mummy," the girl said quickly.

"Siri, don't-" Astrid protested as her daughter managed to take the infant into her arms.

"I can help, mummy, I promise," Siri insisted.

"Siri, you don't understand-"

"Mummy, I can do this" Siri persisted, bouncing the baby boy in her arms.

"Siri, don't bounce-"

"EWWWWW!"

Astrid sighed in frustration, and winced as the 3 month old suddenly became sick all over the girl. Siri turned to her mother with a look of revulsion, as Leif began screaming again, while the 6 year old was covered in sick all down her front. Astrid was silent for a moment, before-

"What do you think you were doing?!" Astrid fumed at the girl, as she took the baby back into her arms, trying once more to calm him down.

"I was trying to help, mummy!" Siri retorted back, as she quickly took the shirt covered in her brothers sick, and tore it off her



body, before throwing it on the floor.

"Didn't I tell you not to help!?" Astrid exclaimed angrily. "I told you not to help, and you ignored me! Leif is sick, Siri, and you just bounce him up and down, like it's the answer to everything!"

"But-"

"But nothing! Do you know how long it took to calm him down, Siri? Astrid said, looking at her daughter crossly.

"No, but I didn't know he was sick!"

"You would have if you'd just listened though!"

Siri looked at her mother in shock. She was just trying to help, and this is how her mother reacts! Why did she even bother, then? Looking at her mother, Siri suddenly became engulfed with anger, and before long she was yelling back.

"I was just trying to help! I'm sick of not being able to do anything for Leif, and I love him mummy! I thought you'd like me helping!" Siri fumed back, catching her mother off guard. Astrid had never heard her daughter yell before, or be this angry, and was stunned into silence, for a moment, before she responded.

"I told you not to help though! If you'd listened, this wouldn't have happened!"

"No, you said not to do that, but you didn't stop me!"

"How could I when you didn't listen!"

"Alright, what's going on here?!"

Astrid and Siri looked away from each other's angry faces, to see Hiccup and Toothless standing in the doorway, both of them in complete shock at what they had just witnessed. Hiccup looked from his wife's red fuming face, to his daughter's, and to his son's screaming form, trying to piece together what was going on.

"What's going on, here? Siri, you never yell. Sweetie, what's the matter?" Hiccup asked the girl gently. Before the girl could answer though, Astrid interjected.

"Leif was sick all over her, because she didn't listen to me!" she said in annoyance, and Siri looked at her father, with wide eyes.

"Daddy, I was just trying to help. I didn't know Leif was sick, I was at Lennarts. I just wanted to help mummy," Siri said desperately.

"So you didn't do it on purpose?" Hiccup said calmly, to which Siri shook her head. Looking at Astrid, she looked down a little sheepishly.

"Well no, it wasn't on purpose, but I kept telling her not too, and she didn't listen to me!" Astrid responded, a little calmer now.

"I thought you didn't want me to help, mummy!" Siri said.

"Enough! Siri, you still should have listened to mummy," Hiccup said gently, and the girl's eyes widened in shock. "Mummy was telling you not to for a reason and that's what should have happened. I know you were ju-"

As her father was talking, Siri's eyes filled with tears. Whether of anger or sadness, she wasn't sure, but one thing was for sure; her daddy wasn't listening either, and he always listened to her. Taking a step back from her parents, she shook her head sadly.

"You don't want to listen! I was just trying to help, and I'm getting in trouble" Siri said sadly, before she looked at her baby brother in her mother's arms, and she frowned angrily. "I wish Leif wasn't here!" Bursting into tears, the little girl suddenly turned and ran up the stairs, shocking both her parents.

"Siri, wait-!" her mother started, but all she was met with was a door slamming in her ears, making her wince, and look at Hiccup, with a look of shock etched on her face. Looking back at his wife, Hiccup was speechless.

"What just happened? I wasn't even mad at her," Hiccup said, dumbfounded.

"You weren't, but I sounded like it," Astrid sighed sadly, as she placed, a now calmer Leif, in his cradle, and collapsed into a chair. "I yelled at her for no reason, and now she thinks we're mad at her. I know it wasn't her fault, I was just frustrated," Astrid said dejectedly, as she placed her head in her hands, guilt eating away at her insides over what had just occurred.

Hiccup sat beside her, and placed an arm around her shoulders gently, causing Astrid to look up at him. Hiccup wasn't surprised at the tears beginning to fill his wife's blue eyes, but it made his stomach knot up all the same. Placing a swift kiss on her temple, Hiccup pulled her closer to him.

"It wasn't your fault, Astrid. You were frustrated, it happens. I could have handled that situation better as well, but we can't change it," Hiccup said softly.

Astrid shook her head though, and went to stand up. "I have to go and see if she's alright, I can't have her thinking we're mad at her," Astrid said desperately. Before she could go anywhere though, Hiccup pulled her back down gently.

"Leave her be, Astrid. In the state she's in now, she won't listen to us anyway," Hiccup said quietly. "I know from experience, Astrid, don't bother a child when they're mad. It will make it worse." Astrid sighed desperately and laid her head on Hiccup's shoulder. "She'll calm down, and we'll talk to her then, I promise," Hiccup said tenderly as he wrapped his arms around his wife, and she gave a nod.

"Yeah, you're right," she said with a sigh, before she made a move to stand up again. Hiccup looked at her questionably, before she gestured towards Leif.

"I have to clean him up from earlier," she explained, before she also looked at her daughter's shirt on the floor. "I also have to do some washing," she winced, as she picked up Siri's shirt.

Hiccup looked at her with a small smile. "I'll do that, you go clean up Leif, OK?"

Astrid nodded and smiled at him gratefully, before giving him a kiss on the cheek. Giving Hiccup the shirt, she wondered over to the cradle and picked up her son, who seemed to have less sick on him, than Siri's shirt. Nevertheless, Astrid quietly went upstairs to clean him up anyway. Waking past Siri's room, she stopped, and wanted so badly to go in and give her a kiss, but knew Hiccup was right. They had to give her some space. Sighing, Astrid moved on to the washroom at the end of the hall, unaware that her daughter had been listening to her footsteps outside the door, and was taken aback when her mother had just moved on. Didn't her mummy and daddy care at all?

Stroking her dragon's head, Siri buried her head in her pillow, trying to stifle the tears in her eyes from falling. Her mummy had just walked past, without even bothering to come in and ask her if she was alright. If her mummy and daddy were going to stay mad at her though, she wasn't coming out of her room. She didn't want to be yelled at again, and she was still mad at them too. Once more, she heard her mother's footsteps come back from the washroom, and not even stop outside her room, leading to a fresh wave of tears to burst forth once more.

\* \* \*

><p>The afternoon passed, and there were no signs of Siri leaving her room. At dinnertime, Hiccup and Astrid started to worry, as there was no sound coming from the girl's room at all, and she had never missed a meal in her life, no matter what she felt.<p>

"Hiccup, I have to go check on her, I can't just leave her alone," Astrid said worriedly, as she grabbed her daughter's plate.

"I'm worried too," Hiccup said anxiously. "I'll go give Leif his bath, while you go. I don't want to go in with you and make her more upset than she is already."

Astrid nodded, before going upstairs. Stopping outside the door, she listened for any sign of movement or sound, and when she didn't detect any, she rapped on the door gently.

"Siri? Baby, can I come in?"

Astrid listened once more to hear a low mumble in reply. Relieved, she entered the girl's room, and saw that she was curled up in a ball on the bed, stroking Midnight's head. Upon her mother's entrance into the room, the little girl looked up slightly, but didn't make a move to get up. Astrid sighed sadly at the knowledge her daughter was still upset.

"Sweetie, I brought you some dinner. Do you want it?" Astrid said gently, walking over to the girl and sitting down on the bed beside her. Siri looked up, but didn't speak to her mother, but she accepted

the food gratefully.

"Sweetie, I know you're upset, but I hope you know that I didn't mean to get angry with you," Astrid said hopefully.

Siri huffed a little. "Yes, you did. You were mad when I tried to help," she said sadly.

Astrid placed a hand on her daughter's arm. "Sweetie, I wasn't mad, I was just frustrated. Leif had been crying all day, and I was just calming him down, when you took him."

"You still got mad!" Siri said angrily. "I want to help, and you never let me. Leif has ruined everything."

"Siri!" Astrid exclaimed in shock. Siri winced, thinking her mother was angry again, before turning away from her. She wasn't hungry after all.

"Go away."

"Siri, come on, I'm just trying to help," Astrid said gently.

'I said go away!' Siri yelled.

Astrid was about to reprimand her daughter for yelling at her, but decided she needed to cool down. Sighing sadly, she stood up, but left the plate there in case she decided she wanted to eat something after all. Walking over to the door, she stopped, and turned around.

"Just come to me or daddy if you need anything, OK?"

Siri mumbled a reply, and Astrid let out another sigh, before joining Hiccup in the wash room. Maybe Siri would feel better by the morning, she hoped, as she walked into the washroom to see Hiccup gently giving Leif a bath, who was smiling up at his daddy. Leif had begun to smile a few weeks back, and when he wasn't crying, he was smiling. Astrid beamed slightly at the sight, before she gave a sigh, and walked over to her husband and baby boy.

"She ate a little, but she still won't talk to me," Astrid said quietly, as Hiccup looked at her with questioning eyes. Upon hearing this, Hiccup gave out a long sigh, before placing an arm around her shoulders gently, while the other arm was around Leif's tiny shoulders.

"She'll calm down, Astrid, I'm sure. She's only 6," Hiccup said hopefully.

"I know, but I've never seen her, this mad," Astrid said miserably.

"Neither have I," Hiccup confessed with a worried look. "Do you want me to talk to her?"

Astrid shook her head. "It won't get anywhere tonight, but I'll check on her before we go to bed."

\* \* \*

><p>Siri still refused to come out of her room by the time bedtime rolled around. Hiccup had already put Leif to bed, and the parents were determined to make sure her daughter was alright before turning in themselves, gobsmacked their daughter had been angry for so long. Walking past her room, before turning in, Hiccup gently knocked on her door, before opening it slightly, peeking in. Siri was in her bedclothes, curled up under the covers, facing the other way. Creeping over to the young girl, Hiccup noticed that she was already asleep, or at least she <em>seemed<em> to be.

"Siri?" he asked gently, placing a hand on her shoulder. When she didn't stir, Hiccup turned to his wife, with a sad smile.

"She obviously didn't want to wait up for us," he noted with a sigh, which was interrupted by a cry piercing the air.

"Oh, not again!" Hiccup said, as he turned around to face the sound of the noise.

Astrid placed a hand on his arm gently. "You get Leif, he's probably wet. I'll make sure she's OK, and join you," she said softly, to which Hiccup heaved a great sigh, before nodding, and leaving the room to tend to his son.

Astrid placed a hand on her daughter's forehead gently, stroking some hair out of her face. She looked a lot calmer asleep, than she had earlier, Astrid noted with some relief. Satisfied that her daughter was alright, Astrid gave her a quick kiss on her forehead, before walking over to the door. Looking back, she gave her a small smile, before quietly shutting the door behind her.

Siri's eyes opened as she heard her mother's footsteps retreating down the hall. Listening out for any sign of her mother coming back, her eyes suddenly widened at the sound of her parents' bedroom door closing, indicating they had gone to bed for the night. They hadn't even checked to see if she was really asleep! Her mother always knew when she was faking it, yet tonight, both her and her father had just walked out, without so much as a goodnight or a kiss. Heck, her father had walked out without even giving her a kiss, all because her brother started crying! Was that all it took these days for her parents to ignore her, was a simple cry from her brother? Well, if it was, she wasn't sticking around to find out.

Tumbling out of bed, Siri quickly grabbed her regular outfit and changed out of her night clothes. Midnight lifted her head up, and tilted her head in confusion as her friend, went around the room, collecting clothes and other trinkets, stuffing them into her satchel with no care at all. Siri's hand hovered over her little dragon doll her father had given her for her first Snoggletog, which she had affectionately named Sky, unsure of how to proceed. Picking up the dragon doll, she looked at it, and tears prickled at the young girl's eyes remembering how many times her and her father had played together using this doll. Mind made up, she grabbed the doll and gently placed it in her satchel along with the other things, before slinging it over her shoulder.

"Come on Midnight, we're leaving," Siri said quickly.

Many people on Berk thought Terrible Terrors weren't very bright

creatures, but the look the little dragon gave to her friend in this instant would have changed anyone's minds. Midnight gave a look to rival Toothless's disappointed look that he sometimes gave to her father, and flew in front of her door, trying to stop her from opening it. Siri scowled at the little dragon, before gently using her foot to slide the dragon out of the way.

"If you're not going to come, fine, but I'm going," Siri said sadly, as she quietly opened her door. Peeking out, she looked around to see if the coast was clear. All was quiet. Siri walked out of the room, and went to close the door again, when Midnight appeared beside her. She wasn't letting her human go alone.

Siri smiled, and gave the Terror a gentle pat on her head. "Thanks, Midnight," she said gratefully, as she shut the door with a soft click, before tip toeing down the hall, then down the stairs. Grabbing a few pieces of fruit from the table downstairs, Siri headed towards the front door, and opened it with a groan. She forgot how heavy that door could be. Looking back upstairs, she was slightly saddened to notice her parents hadn't heard her; she was half hoping they would catch her leaving, and convince her to come back. The girl suddenly was engulfed with guilt, and was about to head back upstairs, when she heard the cries of her brother once more. Right, that was why she was leaving, she thought. Turning her back on the stairs, she quietly slipped out of the house, and gently shut the door behind her.

A gust of wind suddenly hit her as soon as she was outside, and she shivered. It hadn't been this cold during the day, and as the 6 year old looked up at the night sky, she was surprised to see thick white clouds covering most of the sky, which the girl knew to be snow clouds. Reaching out her hand, she noticed light flurries of snow landing in her hand, and her eyes widened in fear. If she was going to leave, she better do it fast.

Pulling her furs closer to her body, the little girl looked around at her surroundings, before quickly hurrying into the direction of the forest. Once in the protection of the trees, the little girl suddenly looked back at her house.

I'm never going back, she thought. She took one last look at the house, before turning and running further into the woods.

\* \* \*

><p><em>Yep, I ended on a cliffhanger! Well, sort of lol. I hope this chapter turned out as well as I hoped though : I really wanted to showcase that Siri is at the end of her tether, and feels so emotional about what's happening. She's so young, she seriously believes running away is the best option. \_

\_So, next chapter, Hiccup and Astrid find out their daughter has run away and it's a race to find her, and if you can tell, there's more problems with just her running away to contend with. I'm actually really enjoying writing something different than family fluff for once, and I'm really looking forward to the next chapter! After this storyline though, it will be back to family fluff though I promise :) I just wanted to showcase that their lives are no always perfect, and that Siri is like any other child, and very jealous of her sibling.

\_Don't forget to review! My reviews DID go back up last chapter to the reviewers who asked, so thankyou! I'm still a little iffy on how this chapter turned out, but I hope it was ok. Remember once again, NO FLAMES, but KIND constructive criticism is accepted.\_

\_Thanks for reading! :D\_

## 16. Chapter 16: Finding Siri

\_Wow, who would have thought a drama storyline would have got this much attention! I got 16 reviews last chapter, the highest number of reviews I ever received for a chapter, so thankyou so much guys. I appreciate it! :)\_

\_Alright, so this is the second of three parts to this storyline. In this chapter, Hiccup and Astrid find out their daughter has run away, and its an emotional journey in finding her to get her back. Its mostly about them trying to find her, with a bit of Siri mixed in, but I think this chapter is quite emotional, well I hope it is anyway. Most of the emotion comes from Astrid in this chapter, and you'll soon see why.\_

\_Anyway, on with the next part! :)\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 16: Finding Siri<span>

\* \* \*

><p>"Astrid?"<p>

Astrid groaned, and mumbled into her pillow. What was Hiccup doing, waking her up so early? It was still dark outside, and she couldn't hear Leif crying, so what was so urgent he needed to wake her up?

"Astrid!" Hiccup said louder, shaking his wife's shoulder.

"Hiccup, what is it? It's still early," Astrid murmured into her pillow.

Hiccup gave a chuckle. "Actually, it's morning. It's snowing outside," Hiccup said, as he gestured to the window overhanging their bed.

Astrid frowned and turned over, following his line of sight. Sure enough, it was dark and snowing heavily, but there was a tinge of light within the clouds, which was the only indication it was morning in the dark surroundings.

Astrid looked back at Hiccup, in bewilderment. "...and you woke me up why? Why couldn't we just sleep in?" she asked irritably.

"Because I have a council meeting I'm late for, and I didn't want to leave without saying goodbye," Hiccup said with a loving smile at his wife. "Plus, if I'm any later, they'll kill me, so there's that too," Hiccup added with a laugh, as he picked up his satchel, preparing to

leave.

"You're the Chief, that'd be treason", Astrid said sleepily, eyes closing once more.

Hiccup snorted. "Regardless, milady, I better get going. Can you tell Siri I'll be home soon? I might spend the afternoon with her," Hiccup said gently.

Astrid's eyes shot open, and became wide as she recalled the previous night's events, and she scrambled to get out of bed. "Is she up?" Astrid asked quickly, as she grabbed the closest outfit she could find and began putting it on.

'No, her doors shut; I think she's slept in too. I don't want to disturb her, but I have to go," Hiccup said hurriedly as he gave Astrid a quick peck on the lips. "I'll be back soon, I don't like the look of this weather!" he called as he rushed down the stairs, Toothless following close behind.

"Yeah, neither do I," Astrid said quietly, as she looked out the window. The snow was falling thick and fast, and the sky was turning darker by the minute as she continued to gaze out, while in the background, Astrid shuddered as she also heard the whistling of the wind outside. This was just the start of the bad weather, and she knew it.

Knowing it was likely to get colder, Astrid put on the warmest outfit she could find, before walking onto the balcony outside the room. Looking towards Siri's room however, Astrid noticed the door was still shut. This concerned the young mother, considering the events of the previous night; what if her daughter was still upset? Not wanting to upset her little girl, further, Astrid approached her door, before gently knocking.

"Siri, do you want some breakfast?" she asked quietly, trying to sound as pleasant as possible. When she heard no reply, she slowly opened the door to find Siri's bedding thrown on the floor. Astrid frowned. Was she up already? She thought.

"Siri?!" Astrid yelled, as she walked out of the room, and looked down to the lower level. When she couldn't see her, Astrid went back to room, perplexed. As she looked around the room though, Astrid's heart skipped a beat. Her satchel was gone. A knot began to tighten in Astrid's stomach. Midnight wasn't there either, and upon closer inspection, neither was, Sky, her plush dragon doll. The knot tightened. That doll never left the room. It was uncomfortable for her to breathe by this point, as realisation suddenly dawned on the young mother.

"No," she breathed. "No, no, no, no," Astrid repeated in a panic, as she staggered backwards, using the doorframe to support herself, as she began to have trouble breathing. Quickly starting, she pushed herself off the doorframe and stumbled to Lief's cot, swaddling the young baby in heavy wraps while throwing on her heavy furs. She spun around, her chest still aching, and began to sprint through the house and down the stairs, towards the door.

Astrid peeled out of the house. She made a beeline straight for the Great Hall, almost knocking over Gobber in the process, and passing



so close to Bucket, that his bucket span. She didn't stop for any of them to apologise; her legs wouldn't let her. She flew up the stairs to the Great Hall and slammed open the doors to the Great Hall with such force that snow on the roofs of the nearest house fell down.

"HICCUP!"

Hiccup looked up with concern at the sound of his wife's voice, and his eyes widened in surprise as he saw her pelt towards the table, faster than he'd ever seen her run, before coming to an abrupt halt as she slammed into the table, almost bouncing off. Hearing her ragged breathing, Hiccup quickly got up and raced over to her, placing an arm around her shoulders, at which point she looked up at him with a look of horror. Opening her mouth, she tried to tell him, but all Hiccup caught was 'Siri', 'gone' and 'empty', making the young Chief frown in confusion.

"Woah, slow down Astrid, I don't understand. Who's gone?" Hiccup said anxiously, as he looked into his wife's wide eyes.

"Siri!" Astrid screamed, as her eyes filled with tears.

Hiccup's face paled, and he suddenly reached out for the table for support. Looking into his wife's eyes, he desperately hoped it was some sort of joke, but all he could see in them was fear and panic.

"She...Are you sure she didn't just leave early?" Hiccup stammered hopefully, but his heart plummeted when Astrid shook her head wildly.

"She's gone, Hiccup! Her satchels gone, and so are half of her clothes!" Astrid screamed.

"Are...Are you sure? She could have just gone to a friend's house, without telling us," Hiccup suggested optimistically, but his heart skipped a beat, when Astrid gave him a tearful look, as she confirmed what he was fearful of hearing.

"Sky's gone too."

A wave of nausea suddenly hit the young father, as he reached out once more for the table, only to be held up by Fishlegs who had come to his aid. The entire council was silent for a moment, before Snotlout suddenly yelled out.

"Alright, you heard Astrid, there's a child missing, and a blizzard coming in, let's move!" Snotlout yelled his voice full of authority, as the council suddenly sprung to action. Separating into search groups, Snotlout and the rest of their small group of friends remained there, deciding to take up the search with Hiccup and Astrid.

Hiccup looked at Astrid, with a look of concern filling his features. "How long do you think she's been gone for? I never even heard her leave," Hiccup asked her, the worry evident in the tone of his voice.

"Neither did I! She must have left sometime during the night," Astrid

replied, her voice cracking as she spoke. "I knew she was angry, but I never expected this!" Astrid added, as she looked down at her sleeping son in her arms, grateful that one of her children was safe. Hiccup, realising where her thoughts were at, gently touched his wife's cheek, and as she looked up at him tearfully, he gave her a gentle smile.

"We'll find her, Astrid. She couldn't have gone too far," Hiccup reassured her, stroking her cheek tenderly.

"Find who?"

Hiccup and Astrid turned around to see Gobber and Anna come into the Great Hall, both wearing identical looks of confusion upon their faces at the activity going on around them. It had been Gobber who had spoken, and looking around, he frowned.

"What's going on?" he asked, before he looked at Astrid. "What's so urgent that you almost knocked me over, lass?" Before Astrid could speak though, Hiccup spoke up, his voice sounding a little strangled.

"Siri's run away," Hiccup said quietly.

Gobber's face paled, but true to form, he quickly sprung into action. "I'll get Valka!" Gobber said quickly, before he turned and ran back out the great doors of the hall, before stopping and looking back at the doorway. "Don't worry, we'll find her!" he yelled out, before disappearing back down the steps.

Anna rushed over to her friend, and placed an arm around her shoulders. "What happened? Why did she run away?" she asked worriedly.

"I don't know! She was mad at us last night because of a fight we had, but I never thought she'd do this!" Astrid exclaimed frantically.

Anna frowned nervously. "Why were you fighting?" she asked anxiously. Astrid opened her mouth to answer, but her voice only came out in strangled sounds; Hiccup spoke up, his voice quiet, but audible.

"Siri tried to help Astrid with Leif yesterday afternoon, and she got spewed on. Astrid yelled at her, and she hadn't been out of her room since then," Hiccup explained quietly. "I knew she was upset yesterday, but I never would have thought she'd do this," Hiccup said, as tears began to fill his own green eyes.

Anna looked mortified as Hiccup explained this. Was it possible, her advice on helping Leif, had led to her running away? Looking at Astrid, Astrid suddenly noticed this change in her friend's expression, and she looked at her, eyebrows furrowed.

"What do you know, Anna?" Astrid asked quietly.

Anna looked at Hiccup nervously, before looking back at Astrid, her eyes wide with anxiety. "I don't know where Siri has run off too, but..." Anna trailed off nervously, and Astrid's eyes flashed dangerously. Noticing the change, Fishlegs quickly stepped forward

and gently took Leif from her arms, worried about how Astrid could react, while Hiccup stood there nervously, unsure what to expect.

"But, what? What do you \_know \_Anna, tell me!" Astrid said angrily, as she stood right in front of Anna's face.

"I don't know for sure, but I may know why Siri ran away," Anna said timidly. Her nervousness was justified when she saw Astrid's eyes flash once more, before Astrid advanced on her, making her step back involuntarily.

"And why would \_you \_know why \_my \_daughter has run away?!" Astrid screamed.

"I don't, but I do know that Siri has been feeling left out and jealous of Leif," Anna said calmly. "When Siri was over yesterday, she was really upset with what was going on at home, and she needed someone to talk to, so I offered to listen. I promised her, I wouldn't tell you what she said, because she didn't want you to know"

"I'm \_her\_ mother!" Astrid screeched. "You should have told me how she felt, no matter what you promised her!"

"She didn't want you to know! She loves Leif, but she's upset of him getting all the attention! You're trying your best, Astrid, I know that, that's why I didnt want you to feel bad, by telling you!"

Astrid huffed angrily. "Oh, and finding out my daughter has run away, makes me feel better does it?! If I had known, maybe I could have avoided this!"

"She didn't \_want\_ you to know! She knew how busy you were with Leif; she didn't want to burden you! That's why she broke down crying at my place yesterday..." Anna trailed off, and her eyes widened in horror at what she'd just revealed.

"She \_WHAT\_!" Astrid screeched, making the young woman wince. "My daughter breaks down, and you never think to tell me?! I thought you were my friend, Anna! My little girl shouldn't have had to come to \_you \_about this!"

"She was scared of telling you! She didn't want you to think she was being selfish for feeling this way! All she wants is to be able to help. That's why I gave her the advice of helping without being asked yesterday, "Anna said.

Astrid suddenly stiffened. "You gave her the advice of helping out?" Astrid asked dangerously.

Anna flinched at the tone in Astrid's voice. She wasn't sure why her friend was acting this way, but knew she had better answer. "I told her it worked with Lennart and Sigmund, so I thought it would work with her. I didn't think it would cause a fight..."

"Well thanks to your \_advice\_, I yelled at my daughter for something that wasn't even her fault! Now she thinks I hate her, and has run away!" Astrid screamed, suddenly lunging for the young woman, but was

quickly held back by Hiccup's arms wrapping around her waist, pulling her away.

"That's enough, Astrid! Don't do something you'll regret!" Hiccup begged her, as he held his arms around her waist as tight as he could.

"I won't regret anything, but she will if anything happens to my daughter!" Astrid screamed, voice cracking.

"That's enough!" Snotlout yelled angrily, as he stood in front of wife protectively. "I don't care how upset you are, Astrid, but don't you dare blame my wife! All she tried to do was help Siri; she could never have known this was going to happen! How about instead of finding someone to blame, you go out there and find her!"

Astrid breathed heavily, as she slowly began to calm down. Snotlout was right, she was wasting time; time she should have been spending finding her daughter. Tears of shame filled her eyes, as she looked at Anna, her face reddening with embarrassment, and her throat sore from yelling. "I'm sorry," she said simply, as Hiccup finally released her from his protective grip.

Not one to hold a grudge, Anna gave Astrid a gentle smile. "It's alright. Just go and find her, I'll look after Leif until you get back," she said gently as she wrapped her arms around her in a comforting embrace.

"Leif's still nursing though," Astrid said anxiously, as she broke away from the embrace.

"I'll do that, Astrid," Annika interjected from nearby, holding 6 month old Eric in her arms.

Astrid gave a grateful nod to her, and as Fishlegs passed 3 month old Leif over to Anna, Hiccup suddenly turned to the remaining Vikings in the room.

"Alright, we have to fan out and find my little girl. There is a blizzard coming, and that isn't going to help matters. We have to go on foot, and we have to search everywhere we can think of. Siri isn't known to be predictable, so she could be anywhere. Let's get going!"

There was a bustle of activity as everyone filed out quickly, to begin the search, Hiccup and Astrid following behind them along with Toothless and Stormfly. Before leaving the hall, Astrid stopped, and her eyes widened in fear as she watched the snow coming down and the wind picking up. How in Thor's name were they going to be able to find Siri in this weather?

Astrid jumped as Hiccup wrapped his arms around her, pulling her into a tight embrace. "We'll find her Astrid, I promise. She couldn't have gotten too far," Hiccup said evenly, as he let go of her and kissed her forehead.

Astrid smiled gratefully. "Alright, let's go," she said quickly, before she took hold of Hiccup's hand, dragged him down the stairs, and joined the search party.

\* \* \*

><p>After running away the previous night, Siri had spent the night at the cove under the shelter of some enclosed trees. Not long after waking up the next morning though, the little girl knew she couldn't remain in the open like she was. The snow was coming down thick and fast, and the wind was like ice going right through the girl's furs. Looking up at the sky, she shuddered as she saw the clouds were getting darker by the minute. She had to find shelter until it was over. Looking down at her dragon, she gestured to her, as she picked up her satchel.<p>

"Come on, Midnight, we have to go," she said quickly, as she began to walk forward, only for her path to be blocked by her Terrible Terror. Midnight looked up at her human with her head tilted to one side, as if disapproving of the girl's plan.

Siri scowled. "Don't look at me like that, Midnight, I'm not going home!" When Midnight continued to stare up at her, though, Siri's look softened, as she heaved a great sigh.

"I know its cold, but I'm not going home," Siri said sadly, picking up the little dragon in her arms. "Mummy and daddy love Leif more than me..." Siri trailed off, tears welling up in her bright blue eyes once more. Midnight looked up at her friend and gave her a comforting lick on her cheek, causing Siri to snap out of her thoughts, before blinking her tears back. There was no point to them getting upset over her brother; she wasn't going back.

"Come on, let's go," she said. Placing the Terrible Terror back on the ground, she trudged through the accumulating snow, through the cove, and back into the forest. Even under the shelter of the trees, the snow was blowing sideways into the two friends, making Siri shiver violently and wrap the furs closer to her body. Combined with the wind, the snow was so deep, it made for slow progress as Siri continually fell over into the thick snow and as she stood up, the wind also tried its best in knocking her back to the ground. Even Midnight couldn't fly in this weather, without being blown to far from her friend, who she was determined to protect.

Siri fell over for what felt like the hundredth time, and as she landed in the snow, she thought she heard her name being called. Sitting up, she frowned and listened closely. There it was again. Grabbing onto a tree trunk, she heaved herself up, and listened for it once more, but didn't hear it again.

Of course it wasn't anyone calling out, she thought sadly. Why would her mummy and daddy be looking for her, especially in this weather? Sighing sadly, she pushed herself off the tree trunk and continued to walk on, Midnight walking closely beside her. Keeping her head down against the wind, she suddenly looked up at the right time to see a cave close by.

Siri heaved a sigh of relief. "Come on, Midnight, let's go there!" she yelled over the wind.

Midnight gave a small squawk of relief, as she followed the 6 year old to the cave. As Siri was about to walk in, she thought she heard her name once more, and she whipped around, squinting through the thick snow, trying to find the source of the voices. She could have

sworn it was her mummy's voice. Were they really out here trying to find her?

"Mummy!" she yelled back over the roar of the wind, hopeful to hear some sort of reply. When she didn't hear one, the little girl looked down at the ground in misery, before walking into a tiny windblown cave, barely big enough for herself and Midnight to fit into. It was still cold and windy inside, but offered better protection than the outside.

"I thought I heard mummy," Siri said quietly to the little dragon. Midnight looked up at her, and gave her a sad expression before climbing onto the girl's lap. Siri's eyes filled with tears as she stroked the dragons back, before she emitted a tiny sob. "I don't know why, Midnight, but I wanted it to be mummy," she choked out. "Why would it be when mummy was so mad?" As the girl continued to sob, Midnight licked her hand in comfort, and curled up lovingly in her lap, making Siri smile a little. At least she had her dragon with her. Stroking the dragon's head, she continued to sit and wait, hoping for the storm to pass over soon.

\* \* \*

><p>"Siri!"<p>

Hiccup and Astrid, along with the rest of their group of friends, and their dragons, had been searching for over an hour. Having realised that Siri had spent the night at the cove, they had continued to walk on, hoping they could catch up to her. With all the snow, though, it was impossible to tell which way she'd gone, or if she had even been there. Flying on the dragons was a no-go due to the strength of the winds, and visibility was poor on the ground. Having found footprints, they were also soon lost as quickly as they were found, the snow having brushed away any footprints as soon as they appeared.

"Siri!" Astrid yelled over the howling of the wind.

"Over here, I think I found footprints!" Snotlout called out from nearby, before he frowned. 'Never mind, false alarm!'

Astrid growled in frustration. "This is impossible; we're never going to find her in this weather!"

"Don't talk like that, of course we will!" Hiccup said firmly, as he kept a hold of her hand. "She's a smart girl, she wouldn't be wondering out in the this weather."

"She was upset, Hiccup, you don't know what she'd do," Astrid said quietly.

Hiccup gently stopped her, and looked into his wife's eyes warmly. "No matter how upset she is, Astrid, she won't stay out in the open. She'll be OK. We just have to find her," Hiccup said hopefully.

Astrid gave him a grateful look, and smiled at him, before turning her attention back to the task at hand. "Siri!"

Astrid froze for a second; she thought she heard Siri's voice.

Spinning around to tell the party to listen, she saw Fishlegs had noticed it too and was listening already. "It's no use, I couldn't tell where it came from; the wind is making it sound like it came from different places," he sighed.

"SIRI!" Astrid yelled. Frantically, she began checking anywhere she could reach - trees, rocks, drifts of snow - for her little girl, all the while yelling her name. "SIRI!" Hiccup had to grab her around the waist again before she went out of sight of the search party.

"We don't need two lost Vikings today," he whispered as Astrid sobbed in his arms.

Fishlegs turned to Ruffnut, a deep frown etched into his face and sadness for their friends in his eyes. Turning back to the party, he announced, "I think the voice was coming from this way," he said, pointing upwind, alongside a craggy slope. "We should keep searching as long as we can."

Astrid nodded, still sobbing and holding one of Hiccup's heavily clothed gloved hands with one of her own. "Okay," she mumbled under her breath so that even Hiccup didn't hear.

Hiccup spoke up, "Okay, Fishlegs, if you think that's the way to go. I didn't hear it".

Searching the rest of the afternoon, the party never stopped, or lingered in one place longer than they needed to check it. Several times they had thought they heard the little girls' voice, leading them off in another direction. Only as night began to fall - Thor forbid they could tell only because they could barely see past the next tree now - did they slow. Lanterns were lit with dragon fire, and the search picked up again. That is, until Fishlegs spotted a cave in the side of a hill, and the wind and snow picked up even more than it had during the afternoon.

"We should stop and make camp for the night; we can't keep searching in this weather!" Fishlegs called out over the wind.

Hiccup suddenly stopped. Looking back at his friend, Fishlegs was taken aback at the ferocity in his eyes. Out of the entire group, Hiccup had been the most calm, and collected of them all that day, but all of a sudden this simple statement had caused a change in him, that surprised the group.

"What do you mean stop?!" Hiccup yelled furiously. "My \_daughter \_is out in this weather, Fishlegs, and you want us to stop-!"

"Hiccup, I only meant-"

"I know what you meant! You wanted us to stop just because it's getting late!" Hiccup snapped angrily. "My little girl is out there somewhere, lost, and probably cold! If we stop, we may not be able to find her!"

"Hiccup, be reasonable. We could barely see when it was light, let alone now-"

"I DON'T CARE!" Hiccup yelled. "All I care about is getting my daughter back, no matter what it takes! If we stop for the night,

anything could happen to her!" Looking around the group angrily, Hiccup saw the wearied looks on the faces of his friends, causing his anger to boil over.

"So that's it, you're all going to give up, and leave my baby girl out there!" Hiccup screamed, pointing outside the mouth of the cave at the blizzard raging outside. "What if it was Kelda, Fishlegs?" He turned to Fishlegs and Ruffnut, before advancing on Tuffnut, "Or Eric!" before finally looking at Snotlout, who was stunned into silence at Hiccup's outburst. "What about Lennart and Sigmund, huh? Would you leave them out in this weather?! Lennart is best friends with Siri, Snotlout; I thought you'd care more-"

"Hiccup..." Astrid interjected quietly. Hiccup turned to look at her angrily, but once he saw the exhaustion in her eyes, his eyes softened as he took one of her hands in his own. Looking up at her husband's face, Astrid gave a small sigh.

"Hiccup, they're right," she said quietly, making Hiccup tense again.

Before Hiccup could do or say anything he was going to regret, Snotlout intervened. "Hiccup, we \_can't \_do anything else tonight. If we do, we're just going to get lost, and then Siri will never be found. We can't do ambling around in the dark when she needs us," Snotlout said logically. "The best thing we can do is to wait for morning, and go on. Siri's a smart kid, she'll be fine"

Breathing heavily, Hiccup let go of Astrid's hand, and walked away from them all, hands gripping his hair in frustration. He knew they were right, but it didn't make the situation any better, as he walked over to the cave wall and slammed his fists onto it in anger, as tears of shame quickly filled his eyes, before they spilled over onto his cheeks. Astrid moved to go over to him, but found she couldn't comfort him, and she turned and walked towards the back of the cave instead, not looking anyone in the eye. Instead Ruffnut went over, and placed a comforting hand on his shoulder.

"It's going to be fine, Hiccup. Siri knows this area well, she'll be OK," Ruffnut said gently. Hiccup turned to face her with a watery smile, before taking a deep breath to steady himself. Turning back to face the others, he frowned when he didn't see his wife in front of him. Looking at Snotlout, who gave him a sad smile, before gesturing towards the back of the cave, where she was standing with her back towards them.

Hiccup gave a grateful nod towards him, before walking over to Astrid. As he walked closer to her though, he stopped abruptly when he heard a loud sob. Watching Astrid, Hiccup eyes widened in alarm as he noticed Hiccup noticed she was trembling visibly through her heavy winter furs even from a distance, her breathing shallow and ragged; Astrid's chest hurt every time she breathed, and the frosty night-time air was not helping. As Hiccup began to approach her, she sank to her knees, holding her arms around her legs, and began to sob uncontrollably.

Hiccup raced over to her, and fell to his knees beside her, before taking her into his arms. Astrid flung her arms around Hiccup's neck, before burying her head into his chest, tears falling uncontrollably onto the cotton of Hiccup's shirt. As she sobbed, her breathing



became more laboured, and as she gasped for air, Hiccup pulled back slightly, and placed a hand on her back.

"Ssh..." Hiccup hushed her gently. "Calm down, Astrid, take a deep breath, it's alright"

"It's...not alright... it's my fault, Hiccup... if I hadn't ignored Siri, she wouldn't be...out there now," Astrid said breathlessly. "I made her run away... and now we'll never find her. I'm the worst mother...in the world!" she screamed, as tears dripped down her face.

"Astrid," Hiccup said firmly, as he placed a hand on his wife's face gently. "Astrid, look at me, sweetheart." When Astrid refused to look up though, he carefully placed a hand under her chin, lifting it up slowly, and took a sharp intake of breath when he saw Astrid's blue eyes filled to the brim with tears, and spilling down her cheeks like a waterfall. Locking his green eyes onto her blue ones, he spoke very firmly.

"Listen to me, Astrid. Don't you dare blame yourself over this; it is not your fault. It was Siri's choice to run away, you didn't push her out the door-

"I might as well have!" Astrid sobbed. "I should have known she was upset, but no, I didn't notice, and I've been ignoring her for weeks! It's no wonder she ran away! All I do is give attention to Leif because he cries all the time, when I should have been balancing them. I'm a bad mother, Hiccup, and now my daughter hates me, and will probably never come home. If that happens, I'll understand if you don't want to be with me anymore," Astrid wept.

"Astrid!" Hiccup exclaimed in shock. "Nothing could make me not want you in my life, don't you ever think that. Siri will come home, and we will find her. If anyone is to blame, it's both of us, you weren't the only one not giving her the attention she deserves, so don't blame it on all on yourself," Hiccup said, as he caressed his wife's cheek. "I promise you, we will get our little girl back, and we will make sure that she knows she is loved, and precious to us. Don't go falling apart on me sweetheart. Siri is out there somewhere, and I swear to Thor, we will find her," Hiccup said.

Astrid looked up at Hiccup, and met his loving gaze, and her heart skipped a beat at the sincerity in his eyes. Taking a deep breath, her breathing became easier, as Hiccup reached up, using his thumbs to brush aside the tears still cascading down her cheeks, before giving her a gentle kiss on her temple.

"It's going to be alright, Astrid. We need to stay positive, and keep looking for her tomorrow. She'll be alright," Hiccup said softly, as Astrid suddenly felt the emotions of the day wash over her, as she suddenly leant her head against Hiccup's shoulder, her eyes closing. Hiccup wrapped his arms around her lovingly, and as he met his lips with her blonde hair gently, he smiled, as he saw, she had worn himself out, and was now sleeping peacefully on his shoulder. Stroking her hair, Hiccup stayed in the position he was in, not wanting to move and wake her. Astrid had spent the whole day blaming herself, and now that she was calm, she deserved sleep more than he did.

"Is she alright?" Snotlout asked quietly as he came over to them.

Hiccup looked up at him and nodded. "She's better, that's for sure. She's right though, we really need to find her," Hiccup said, worry evident in his eyes.

Snotlout gave him a reassured smile. "We heard Siri today, so we know she's OK. I have a feeling we'll find her soon. If she called back, she obviously wants to be at home."

Hiccup sighed. "I just wish we hadn't given her the reason to run away. I love her so much, Snotlout, and if anything happens to her, I'll never forgive myself," Hiccup said tearfully.

"Don't think like that," Snotlout said firmly. "You will find her, just as you promised Astrid. Siri loves you two more than anything, I've heard her, and seen her with you two. She'll come home, Hiccup," Snotlout reassured him.

Hiccup couldn't help, but give his friend a warm smile. They had certainly come a long way since they kids, and for that he was grateful, before he emitted a wide yawn.

"Why don't you get some sleep, Hiccup? We'll wake you when it's light again," Snotlout said, and Hiccup nodded, before Toothless and Stormfly came up to Hiccup, both nuzzling him gently, making him emit a short laugh, before they settled down next to him.

"You think she'll be OK, bud?" Hiccup asked the dragon worriedly, as he gently stroked the dragons head. Toothless gave his rider a reassured look, before nudging his shoulder with a gummy smile. If there was one thing the dragon was sure of most, it was that Siri was a stubborn little girl, and she would be fine, no matter how bad the weather was. Hiccup could tell where his dragon's thoughts appeared to be at, and gave him a warm smile.

"Thanks, bud," Hiccup said gratefully, before he looked down at Astrid, still sleeping peacefully sleeping on his shoulder. Leaning his head against hers, Hiccup gently took her hand in his, before following her lead to be ready for the search again the next morning.

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><p>Siri had kept shelter in the tiny windblown cave all day. Once she had tried to go out and continue walking, only to be blown forcefully to the ground by the unrelenting winds blowing outside the cave. Realising it was futile to keep walking, she had returned to the cave to wait out the storm, which never seemed to let up. Midnight was managing to keep a tiny fire going, but with the draft coming in thick and fast, it wasn't enough the little girl from shivering violently, despite her heavy furs.<p>

By nightfall, Siri was so cold she was snuggled up to the furthest part of the cave, trying to keep her arms close to her. She hadn't eaten since that morning, and she was scared, and sleepy. She wanted to go home.

Looking at her faithful companion, Siri's eyes filled with tears. "I

wanna go home," she said desperately, as she hugged the dragon close to her. "I don't care if mummy and daddy don't pay attention to me, I want to go home." Tears began to spill down her face, as she buried her head in her hands, her shoulders shaking with sobs. Midnight curled up as close she could to her friend, but couldn't do anything more than comfort her, as she wept into her hands.

A gust of wind suddenly extinguished the fire, causing Siri to scream and weep harder. She wanted to go home. She was stupid for leaving home in the first place, and now she wanted was for her parents to come along and take her home. Even if Leif got all the attention, it was still better than being alone, cold and scared in a cave, with Midnight. But would her parents still want her after she'd run away?

Siri jumped as she felt something against her hand, and she looked up to see Midnight licking her hand, with a look on concern in her eyes. Siri looked around and saw the little dragon had managed to get the fire going again. Siri tried to stand up and move over closer the fire, but as she rose, she became dizzy and stumbled, almost smacking her head against the cave wall, barely missing it. Still disoriented, she let herself slump down against the wall, and crawled over to the fire. As she reached the warmth of the fire, Midnight crawled over to her and snuggled up against her chest. She stroked the small black dragon as her eyes began to droop, slowly at first, until she fell asleep. Midnight looked up at her human worriedly, as Siri looked fearfully pale, but as Siri moved in her sleep, the little dragon soon followed her lead, and fell into a slumber beside her, waiting for the snow, to hopefully, pass.

"Hiccup."

Hiccup jerked awake, and looked around. For a moment, he couldn't remember where he was, before he saw Astrid still dozing on his shoulder. Panicking, he looked out the opening and saw that the snow flurries were still just as thick, but there was no wind driving them. It was distinctively brighter and the visibility outside was better than it had been the previous day. Looking back at the person who woke him, he saw it was Snotlout, and then he noticed everyone else was awake and ready to go.

"What time is it?" Hiccup asked quickly.

"Just after dawn, don't worry. We should get going though, while the weather is better." Snotlout said reassuringly.

Hiccup nodded quickly, before turning to Astrid, and gently shook her shoulder. "Astrid, its morning, we have to get going," he said gently.

Astrid's eyes flew open, and she looked around wildly at everyone ready to go, before quickly standing up, knocking Hiccup over in the process. "Let's go then," she said quickly, as Hiccup struggled to get to his feet.

"Thanks sweetheart, I enjoy being knocked to the ground for no reason," Hiccup said with a laugh. Astrid looked at him and gave him a sheepish grin.

'Sorry, Hiccup," she said with a laugh, before her face turned

serious again.

"Can we go? I don't want Siri out there for much longer," she said worriedly.

"We're going now, Astrid, don't worry," Fishlegs said quickly, before he turned and followed the others outside, and Astrid grabbed Hiccup's hand and dragged him out.

Once outside it was clear that the storm was starting to dissipate. The winds had died down, and the snow was much lighter than it had been the previous day, as was the sky. Visibility had cleared up, and it was now possible to see ahead of them, meaning they now had a bearing on where they were as well.

"There's a couple of caves nearby! Siri may be in one of them," Tuffnut called back from the front of the party, surprising Hiccup and Astrid at the level of maturity he was showing.

"Do you think it really was Siri we heard last night?" Astrid asked Hiccup hopefully, as she turned to look at him with wide eyes. Hiccup squeezed the hand that was in his gently, and gave her a warm smile.

"I didn't hear it, but if two of you heard it, it's possible," Hiccup said optimistically.

"Guys, there's some caves up ahead!" Fishlegs called back to them. "They aren't very big, but there's still a chance!" Raising his voice, he started to call out. "SIRI!"

"SIRI!"

Midnight looked up curiously. Was that her human's parents that she heard calling out? Listening intently, she heard it again. Several worried voices calling out her friends name very close by, and two of them were definitely the girl's parents. So they were looking for her after all, just as she thought! Looking towards the little girl, the Terrible Terror went over to her and licked her cheek to try to waken her.

"Hmm, Midnight, leave me alone," Siri mumbled weakly.

Midnight cocked her head in confusion, but then looked carefully upon the young girl's face. Siri was paler than the snow outside, her cheeks having no pink in them at all. She was shivering violently, and her voice sounded weak and croaky, and as she moved, she started to cough. Her friend wasn't well. She needed to get her parents there soon, and fast. Not wanting to leave the little girl, the little dragon hoped her parents would stumble across them.

Listening intently, the Terrible Terror heard the voices call out once more, but they sounded further away. They were walking away from the cave! Looking back at her sick companion, Midnight had no choice, but to go and find them. Siri couldn't stay there much longer. She was mumbling nonsense in her sleep, and no matter what the dragon did, she wouldn't fully awaken, she had to leave.

"I want mummy," Siri mumbled, before emitting a small cough.

That settled it, Midnight was going. Flying out of the tiny cave, Midnight listened out for the voices once more, and when they were heard once more, went flying in that direction. After a few moments, a small party was spotted, among them was the girl's parents, anxiously calling out. Flying down to the group, she emitted a loud squawk, making the group jump and look up above them.

"Midnight!" Astrid screamed in relief, running over to the tiny dragon. Looking around though, she soon realised her daughter wasn't with her dragon, and she frowned worriedly. "Midnight, where's Siri?" Astrid asked in a panic.

Midnight looked up at her, before flying off where she came from. Stopping a short distance away, she looked back at them, expecting them to follow her, but all she got was bewildered looks from the group.

"What's she doing?" Snotlout asked in confusion.

Hiccup frowned as well, before he noticed the dragon was slowly moving away from them, while looking back. Then his eyes widened.

"She wants us to follow her, guys!" Hiccup said quickly.

Astrid's heart skipped a beat as she looked at Hiccup. "Do you think something's wrong with Siri?" she asked anxiously.

"I don't know, but we won't find out just standing here," Hiccup said quickly, as he and the others raced after the Terrible Terror, who flew a short distance in front of them, showing them the way. It didn't take long, before they reached the tiny cave, and as soon as they got there, Hiccup and Astrid came to an abrupt halt.

Siri was so \_pale.\_ If she had stepped outside, they could have lost her in the snow. Noticing her trembling form, and Hiccup and Astrid's both paled as white as their daughter, before they began to run over to her.

"SIRI!"

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><p><em>I'm so sorry to leave you guys on another cliffhanger, but this chapter was already 7000 words long, and I had to end it here before it went on to long! I also want to thank my boyfriend, Alex, who wrote small portions of this chapter when I was stuck on what to write :)<em>

\_So, the next chapter is the last chapter in this storyline. I'm going to pull out all the shots to make this last part both beautiful and emotional, and I will try to post it as soon as I can :)\_

\_Don't forget to review! Remember once again, NO FLAMES, but KIND constructive criticism is accepted :)\_

\_Thanks for reading!\_

\_Alright, this chapter is the end of this storyline. It turned out to be the longest chapter I've ever written with 8000 words, and the hardest. I had major writers block in a lot of it, but lucky for me I have an awesome boyfriend who, when I outline what I want for a scene, gets into it and writes it for me. At least 1/4 of this chapter in some ways was written by him, and I am so grateful to him. Sadly it didn't turn out the way I wanted it too, and some parts do drag on a little, but I at least hope its a fitting end to this plotline. It's not perfect though, and I apologise that it's not as good as my first two chapters :/\_

\_Anyway, onto the chapter! :)\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 17: Reconciliation<span>

\* \* \*

><p>The flight back to Berk was one most terrifying experiences in Hiccup and Astrid's lives. Flying along, their little girl continually slipped in and out of consciousness, mumbling incoherently and her face was growing paler by the minute. Unaware of everything happening around her, the little girl screamed for home, and was moving around so much, Hiccup was struggling to keep his daughter safely wrapped in his arms, while Astrid flew beside him, eyes filled to the brim with tears and her heart beating wildly, in fear for their daughter.<p>

"Come on Toothless, faster!" Hiccup said urgently, as his daughter once more slipped into unconsciousness. Toothless obeyed and sped up the fastest his wings could carry him, growling worriedly, as the young girl wheezed in her father's arms.

"Don't you dare go to sleep, baby, stay with me!" Hiccup exclaimed anxiously, his eyes widening in horror at the little girl's sudden silence.

"Hiccup..." Astrid choked out, noticing her daughter's paling face.

"I'm doing everything I can, Astrid!" Hiccup yelled hysterically, as he stroked Siri's face gently, horrified by the coolness he felt there, as well as her pale complexion. "Come on sweetie, answer me," he added, more urgently.

For a moment, nothing the dragons beating wings could be heard. After a moment though, Hiccup took a sharp intake of breath as he saw his daughter's eyelids flutter a little.

"Daddy?" she asked weakly. "I'm cold..." she said, her voice barely a wisp in the wind.

"I know baby, I know," Hiccup replied, pulling the chilled girl as close to his chest as he could while still keeping balance on Toothless.

"Why are we moving so fast, daddy...?" Siri asked in a withered tone, squinting around in confusion.

"We're flying, sweetie. We need to get you home," Hiccup explained gently.

"Flying... how are we flying...?" the girl asked in confusion.

Hiccup frowned for a moment before slowly answering. "We're on Toothless, sweetheart..."

"What's a toothless...? I have all my teeth..." Siri argued weakly. Hiccup felt Toothless grumble through his seat, before Hiccup looked towards Astrid in alarm. Astrid looked back towards him, her eyes reflecting his thoughts, as they widened with fear and panic.

"Hiccup, we have to get back," she said shakily. "She doesn't even know what's happening!"

"I'm trying, Astrid!" Hiccup said frantically. "Toothless is going as fast as he can!"

"The village is right up ahead, Hiccup!" Fishlegs called from the front of the party, and Hiccup sighed in relief as they saw the village come into view. Gripping his daughter tightly, Toothless came in for a rough landing, before Hiccup quickly slid off and began running towards the healer's house. Astrid and the others landed soon after, before running to join him. Horrified whispers erupted among the villagers as they watched their Chief racing through the village with his daughter tight in his arms.

"Lagetha!" Hiccup yelled anxiously upon reaching the house. Astrid skidded to a halt next to him, before raising her fist and she banging on the door.

"Lagetha!" Astrid screamed hysterically, and was about to bang on the door again, when the door opened quickly to reveal the healer. She took one look at Siri before her own face paled.

"Give her to me, quickly!" she urged hastily, as she took Siri out of Hiccup's arms and raced inside. Hiccup and Astrid rushed in after her, slamming the door shut behind them, before following the healer to a back room. Placing the little girl on a cot in the room, Lagetha got to work immediately, placing a gentle hand upon the girl's head, before taking a sharp intake of breath.

"She's been exposed to the cold for a long time. Not too long, if we can warm her up. I have to do this right." Lagetha calmly explained. "The best way to do this, I think, is with some leather skeins filled with hot water, wrapped in cloths. We need to get her centre warmed; if her arms and legs warm up too fast the cold blood will damage her chest." Taking a trio of skeins off a shelf, Lagetha shuffled over to a drying rack on the side of the room that had a number of cloths layered over it.

"What can we do, Lagetha?" Astrid asked quickly.

"Nothing, I'll work faster if you're out of my way. You'll be all thumbs and toes with the state you're in at the moment, anyway," Lagetha replied.

As she finished wrapping the skeins, Lagatha brought them over to a pot that had been sitting over the fire, full of water, and carefully poured it into the skeins, caring not to spill any on herself. Throughout this all, Siri mumbled incoherently. After they were filled, Lagatha quickly carried them back past the anxious parents, and laid them on top of Siri; they covered her from her neck to her hips. Satisfied with her handiwork, Lagatha wrapped up the pale child in the wrappings lying under Siri in the cot. The girl's fevered whimpering subsided for the moment.

The next five minutes passed without a word from anyone in the hut; Toothless's face popped up at the window expectantly, but Hiccup motioned for him to hop down, and the Night Fury frowned worriedly before hopping off. After another five minutes of quiet, Siri started mumbling again with a low groan. Lagatha checked the child's temperature with her fingers and almost gasped at the cool that the girl exuded.

"I need you to leave. Please. She's not gotten any warm-"

The healer was cut off at this point by an alarmed, incoherent yelp from Astrid, before being quietened by Hiccup; "Shh, sweetie. Just let her do her job."

Lagatha continued: "-she's not gotten any warmer, and she's still quite cold. I want you to leave at the moment, for your sake," she said, looking at the young couple. "Both of you haven't eaten in almost two days â€"and staying here while I work is not going to be any good for you." Astrid opened her mouth to argue, but Lagatha continued, pretending she hadn't noticed. "Just go home and rest. This one will not be taken by the cold, I promise. I'll send for you when she's in a better state," Lagatha said as she began to shoo the pair towards the door.

"Siri!" Astrid yelled as she was near the door, still locked in the direction of the cot. She heard the mumbling stop and heard a quiet "mummyâ€" before Hiccup wrapped an arm around her shoulders and guided her down the steps. Lagatha closed the door quickly behind them, her warm smile emanating from the window for a few seconds as she shoed them again, before quickly disappearing.

"Come on, Astrid. Let's go home," Hiccup said his voice cracking.

"I'm not going home! How can I eat when our daughter is in there?!" Astrid screamed hysterically, her voice raising a few octaves as she spoke. "I've never seen anyone that pale, not even you after the Red Death! She could die, Hiccup, all because we didn't pay enough attention to her!"

Hiccup stood there in silence. He'd never heard Astrid talk about him after the Red Death. Was their daughter really paler than he had been after losing a leg? Hiccup felt nauseous at the thought, but his wife needed to stop blaming herself for this situation. Going over to her, he wrapped his arms around her trembling form, enveloping her into his arms.

"What are you doing?! We need to get back in there, Hiccup!" Astrid yelled angrily, as she struggled against him.



"No," Hiccup said firmly. "Lagetha needs to do her job, Astrid, now let her do it. She's going to be alright, I know it."

"Hiccup's right, Astrid," Fishlegs interjected nervously. "Lagetha is the best healer Berk has ever had. Siri will be just fine."

Astrid went silent. For a moment, nobody knew what she was going to do, before she finally slumped in Hiccup's arms, sobbing silently. Hiccup wrapped his arms around her tightly and pulled her closer, allowing Astrid to bury her head into Hiccup's shoulder, as Hiccup stroked her hair tenderly. Tears formed in his own eyes, but for now he blinked them back. It wouldn't do to have the both of them fall apart, not now anyway.

Hiccup jumped as he felt something nudge against his back, and he turned to see Toothless looking up at him sadly. Stroking the dragons head, Toothless then went over to Astrid and gave her a loving nudge. Astrid looked up to see both Toothless and Stormfly giving her reassured looks, and when Stormfly nudged against her, Astrid managed a small smile, before wrapping her arms around the dragons neck, stroking her face.

"Thanks, girl," she said croakily, before she cleared her throat. Looking at Hiccup, she shakily sighed. 'How long do you think she was like this, before we found her?' she asked fearfully.

Hiccup sighed. "It's hard to tell, but from last night at least I'd think," he said guiltily. His own eyes filled with tears once more as he realised just how long his daughter had been out there exposed to the elements, before a few spilled unsuspecting from his eyes. "Oh gods, what have we done?" he groaned, as he slid down the side of the house onto the snow covered ground.

"You haven't done anything," Snotlout said. Hiccup and Astrid looked at him in disbelief, but he put a hand up to stop them from talking. "You haven't done anything," he repeated. "This is not your fault guys. No matter how much attention you did or didn't give to Siri, I think she'd been thinking of this for awhile, even if she hadn't realised it." Looking at the young parents, Snotlout saw he still had their attention, so he continued. "Siri was upset over Leif guys; there was nothing you could have done to prevent her from leaving, no matter what you think. You could sit here all day, and blame yourselves, but how is that helping anyone?" he said firmly.

"The best you can do is to wait until she's better, and then have a talk with her. She'll know now that you care. You were out all day and night trying to find her, and she'll realise that," Fishlegs said with a smile.

Ruffnut nodded at her husband. "Blaming yourselves isn't helping anything. It wasn't your fault. Sure, you got angry, but you were frustrated, you didn't mean for it to happen," Ruffnut said with a shrug. "You didn't tell her that you hated her, or push her out the door. She left on her own. It's nobody's fault, it was just a misunderstanding."

"A misunderstanding," Astrid scoffed. "That's why she's in the healer hut like she is now."

"Astrid, stop it," Snotlout said angrily. "Dwelling on this isn't going to help. Just let Lagetha do her job, and then go in when she's alright, which she will be. Siri is as stubborn as you both; she'll come through, and be teasing Lennie again by the end of the week."

Astrid opened her mouth to retort, but found she had nothing to say. Looking at Hiccup, his eyes widened at the truth in their friends words. They were just making it worse on themselves.

"They're right, Astrid. We're only making ourselves feel bad about it at the moment," Hiccup said with a sigh, as he stood up to join her.

Astrid was silent. She knew they were right in her heart, but couldn't find the words to admit to both them, and herself, that they were right, and could only manage a weak smile at the corner of her lips. Noticing his wife's reluctance, Hiccup led her over to Lagethas hut and they sat down against the wall, under the window.

"I... I know you're right, Snotlout. I just can't stop myself from feeling it's my fault..." Astrid said quietly.

"Well... you didn't help things with her," Snotlout said slowly. "But you've done all that you can now to try to fix it, and that's as much as any of us could have done" he mused, earning a deadpan glare from Fishlegs, who began to speak, but was cut short by Anna, holding a covered pot, closely followed shortly by Annika and Tuffnut. Noticing her son being held firmly in Annika's arms, Astrid's eyes brightened dramatically, before she stood up once more. Annika, seeing where her friend's gaze was at, gave her a warm smile, before walking over to her.

"Oh no, she's not!" Anna said firmly, noticing Annika was about to hand her Leif. Standing firm in front of a bewildered Astrid, she held out the pot in her hands. "You can hold Leif once you've got some food in your stomach, and that's final," Anna said with a stern look at Astrid's wearied face.

"Anna, come on," Astrid said desperately. "I couldn't eat if I wanted too. Not with Siri like this."

"Which is why you need to eat," Anna replied. "You can't look after her on an empty stomach. Once you've eaten, I'll let you hold Leif." Looking at Astrid and Hiccup's pale faces, she frowned. "Besides, you both look dead on your feet. If you don't eat, you'll go the same way as her."

"What are you Anna, my mother?" Astrid said with a small grin.

"No, but considering yours isn't back yet, someone has to be," Anna said with a laugh.

Hiccup snorted as he watched the frown on his wife's face. He knew she'd been beaten, and she sighed as she realised this. Not stopping with just Astrid though, Anna then turned to Hiccup, with the same stance.

"You too, Hiccup."

Hiccup looked at Anna in surprise. He'd never known the young woman to be so bold with anyone, but her husband. Keeping his shocked gaze upon her, he slowly nodded, before mindlessly taking the pot out of her hands, and sitting down once more, with Astrid following suit. Keeping a close eye on the anxious parents, they watched as they slowly ate their way through the stew in the pot, satisfied that they were finally listening. They didn't eat much, but it was enough to please Anna, who gave a nod to Annika to hand the slumbering baby to his mother.

The change in Astrid was seen almost instantly. As soon as her son was placed in her waiting arms, her whole body relaxed, and her eyes lit up as she cuddled the 3 month old close to her. Hiccup looked down into the pile of blankets, and Anna noticed, that he too looked less anxious to see his son at least, was safe and well.

"How was he?" Astrid asked quickly, looking up at Anna and Annika. "Has he been this quiet the whole time?" she asked in amazement.

Anna opened to her mouth to reply, but was interrupted by the sound of the door behind them opening. Wheeling around, Astrid and Hiccup saw Lagetha walk out of the hut, and Astrid tensed immediately, noticing Lagetha's unreadable expression. Hiccup found himself starting to shake as Lagetha came over to them, with only Astrid's grip on his arm keeping him from collapsing, and vice versa.

Looking up at the distressed parents, Lagetha gave them a warm smile. "She'll be alright..." she began. Hiccup and Astrid both let out identical gasps of relief, cross between a sob and a laugh, as everyone around them sighed in relief. Lagetha let this sink in, before she continued. "...But she was out in that weather for a long time. It will take a little while before her body temperature is back to normal. At the moment she's still unconscious, and she'll probably be confused when she wakes up, but she'll be just fine," Lagetha explained calmly.

'Oh, thank the gods," Hiccup said thankfully, as he closed his eyes and leant up against Toothless, who wrapped his tail around his rider in comfort, looking relieved himself. Astrid, who was still holding Leif, jumped up and looked at Lagetha with a pleading expression.

"Can we go in?" she asked desperately.

"Only if you promise not to act like you did earlier," Lagetha said sternly. "Siri needs peace and quiet to sleep the rest off; she doesn't need her mother stressing out at the moment," Lagetha turned to face Hiccup, who was still shaking, with tears in his bright green eyes. "Or her father for that matter," she added.

Astrid went to reply, but found the healer had a point. Nodding slowly, she turned to Annika and Anna once more. "Would you two mind taking care of Leif again, tonight?" she asked hopefully.

Anna stepped forward immediately and took the baby boy in her arms once more with a smile. "I don't mind, Astrid. Just go and look after your daughter," she said gently.

"Thankyou," Astrid said gratefully, before she entwined her hand with

Hiccup's and followed the healer into the house. Stopping at the door though, she looked back with a slight frown. "Midnight, come on," she said, looking at the little dragon who had been sitting outside anxiously, waiting for news on her friend. When she heard her name, she looked up, before quickly following after the girl's parents. Toothless looked at his rider in desperation before the door closed, resulting in a sigh from Lagetha, but she let the Night Fury in regardless. There was no telling what he'd do if they didn't allow the dragon in.

Before they reached the back room, Lagetha suddenly stopped. "I'll leave you two with her," she said. "But," she pointed a threatening finger at the two, "if you two try to wake her up or stress her out, I will throw you out. I don't care if you're our leaders or not, your daughter is my patient first, understand?"

Looking into the stern face of their healer, both Hiccup and Astrid gave a silent nod. Satisfied, Lagetha gestured for them to go in, which they quickly obliged. Entering the room, Astrid couldn't help but give out a gasp of surprise when her eyes landed on the pale face that was her daughters.

Siri was still as pale as she was when they'd left her. There was a small tinge of pink appearing back in her cheeks, but pure white was still the dominant colour, in not only her cheeks, but the rest of her body as well. She was curled up on her side; her fair hair falling loosely into her face, and was sleeping peacefully; well, what her parents hoped was peaceful, anyway. Her chest was slowly rising and falling, and with each breath, she gently wheezed a little, but in all, she sounded much better than she had a few hours before, especially when she was no longer muttering nonsense.

Upon seeing the face of her sick human, Midnight gave a little squawk of worry before jumping up on the bed, and curling up into a ball next to her. Like the girl's parents, she too wasn't going anywhere until her friend was awake. Toothless went over to give the girl a nudge on her arm, but Hiccup held out his arm to stop him.

"Don't disturb her, bud," he said gently, to which the Night Fury gave a slight nod before settling down next to the bed instead.

Astrid sat beside her slumbering daughter, and looked down at her, tears of guilt filling her eyes. Biting her lip to stop herself from emitting a loud sob, she reached out and held her daughter's small hand in her own, before using her other hand to gently stroke her daughter's hair back. Looking at her little girl's slumbering form, she realised just how small and fragile she looked, especially with the pale colouration of her cheeks. If they had found her any later, Astrid shuddered to think what the outcome would have been.

"Don't think like that," Hiccup said gently, knowing where his wife's thoughts were at. Looking away from her daughter's still form, she was met with her husband's gentle gaze, as he tenderly placed an arm around her shoulders. "She's going to be okay."

"She looks so pale, Hiccup," Astrid whispered. "If Midnight hadn't found us in time..." she trailed off. Looking back at Hiccup, she sighed. "I know things have been hard since Leif was born...but where

did we go so wrong, that she'd want to run away?" Astrid said, her voice cracking on the last word.

"I know," Hiccup sighed. "We didn't know she felt like that though. Maybe, when she wakes up, we can talk with her about all this..." Hiccup trailed off as he brushed a strand of hair behind his daughter's ear.

"I just don't want her to think we don't love her," Astrid said miserably. "If that's what she thinks...then what sort of parents are we?" Astrid sniffed loudly, before wiping her cheeks with the back of her hand.

"Ones that are still learning," Hiccup said. "The hard way," he added quietly.

"You can say that again," Astrid said with a sigh, as she laid her head on his shoulder, not moving her hand away from her daughter's grasp all the while. As she moved their hands, Astrid went still. Looking down at her hand clasped with her little girl's, her eyes widened as she felt the pressure of Siri's hand in her own. Hiccup noticed too, and looked down hopefully, only for Siri to move a little in her slumber, before going still again. That small movement though allowed a small smile to appear on Astrid's lips though.

"Guess she is a stubborn little thing after all," Astrid noted happily. "She's getting some colour back!" she exclaimed happily, as she caressed her little girl's cheek softly, dutifully noting the tiny hints of pink beginning to appear once more there. Bending down, the young mother gave her daughter a light kiss on the cheek, before straightening up with a content look at Hiccup, who looked back at her with a relieved smile.

"You just sleep, baby," Hiccup said lovingly as he stroked his little girl's hand with his thumb. "Mummy and I will be right here."

\* \* \*

><p>Siri's mouth was dry. Her fingers and toes were tingling enough that they hurt. She felt like Toothless had tackled her during a game of catch-dragon. Her eyes were tired, but as she gained consciousness they began to flutter open. Where am I, she thought. The room was dark and the bed felt different. And the room smelled weird, but familiar. Wait, a bed? Where was she? And she was warm. Someone must have found her. Thinking for a second, she found where she recognised the smell from: she was in Lagetha's hut. Looking around the dark room, she could see a large figure resting against the cot she was in, holding her hand. As her eyes became used to the dark, she realised that it was actually two figures, one holding her hand, one lying against the other figure. Who were these figures, she wondered. A whip cracked in her head and she spoke: "Mommy?"; Squeezing the hand in hers, the figure began to shift.<p>

Looking up sleepily, Astrid squinted into the darkness. Since when had she fallen asleep? Looking around, she noticed it was now night time, so it had been several hours since they had been allowed back into the room. Feeling the pressure on her hand again though, Astrid's eyes widened.

"Siri?" she asked hopefully.

"Mummy, is that you?" she heard her daughter's croaky voice speak.

Astrid inhaled sharply as her eyes began to fill with tears. She began to rouse Hiccup, first by rubbing his chest with her free arm, then by brushing the hair back from his forehead. Suddenly starting, Hiccup fell out of his chair and landed square on the floor with a heavy thud. Siri giggled.

Hiccup moaned "Ugh... why is it so dark... stop giggling at me, Astrid."

"I didn't giggle at you," Astrid said. She had retrieved a flint, and using her knife lit a candle on a table near the cot. Her golden hair catching the candlelight, he saw Astrid's face aglow, as she sat back down and saw his little girl. It might have been the candlelight, but it looked to Siri that her parents had spilt charcoal under their eyes. They looked tired, and in the shadow of the candlelight, Siri thought she could see tears in her mother's eyes. Blinking she looked again, and found she was right, and so were her father's! Had they really been worried? Before the 6 year old could voice her thoughts though, her mother spoke up, emotion evident in her tone.

"How are you feeling, sweetie?" she asked, her voice choked.

Feeling the aches and pains in her body, and the headache engulfing her head, Siri answered honestly. "Like Toothless has trampled me at playtime," she groaned. On the floor, Toothless looked up and gave a snort to the analogy given by the girl. Bringing a hand up to her throbbing head, Siri frowned. "What happened?" she asked, in bewilderment.

Astrid looked at Hiccup quickly with wide eyes, before retuning her attention to her little girl. "What...What do you remember, sweetie?" she asked slowly.

"I...I don't know," Siri confessed. Looking up at her parents, her frown deepened. "I just remember going to sleep in the cave I was in." Thinking harder, the little girl suddenly shivered. "I was cold... and I felt sick. Midnight was trying to keep me warm, but the wind blew the fire out. The last thing I remember was going to sleep." Midnight rubbed against her human gently, making Siri jump, but give a small smile as she started to pat her.

"You...You don't remember us getting you back here?" Hiccup asked her, his eyes wide with surprise.

Siri shook her head slowly. "Should I, daddy?" she asked nervously.

"It's just..." Astrid started softly. "You...you weren't with us. When we found you, you were pale and cold, and on the way home..." Astrid trailed off.

"...you were confused," Hiccup continued, as he placed an arm around Astrid's shoulders. "You kept saying you were cold, but then...you asked how we were flying." Looking towards his daughter's shocked face; Hiccup used his free hand to take hers in his own. "You didn't

know who Toothless was, or about the dragons at all. By the time we got you back, you were in a bad way. If Midnight hadn't found us when she did..." Now Hiccup trailed off as well, as he looked at Astrid with fear apparent in his eyes.

Siri looked down at the little dragon in her lap. "Midnight?...How did Midnight find you?"

Astrid patted the tiny dragon sitting in her daughter's lap, and gave a smile. "We found her hovering around as we were calling for you. She must have heard us. When she found us, your dad figured out that she wanted us to follow her, and she led us to the little cave you were in..." Astrid trailed off as a tear ran down her cheek.

"You were so pale, and so cold—we had to get you back here as soon as we could," Hiccup added, the tears not quite spilling from his eyes.

Siri blushed, and felt tears hitting her hand; they were her own. "You—we came and—we found me? After I—we ran away?..." Siri managed to squeeze between wet sobs.

"Of course we did, baby," Astrid said voice thick with emotion. "What made you think we wouldn't?" Reaching up to stroke her daughter's golden locks back, she finally rested her hand on her little girl's cheek where tears were starting to cascade down her face. Looking up at her mother, Siri reached up and held onto her mother's hand with her own.

"I... I thought you were mad," Siri confessed, her voice raising high octaves as she spoke. "I didn't think you wouldn't come after me in the snow..." Siri's voice broke on the last word, and as she looked at her parents stunned faces, she was taken aback at the tears gently gripping down both her parents' faces, into their laps. Her mother's eyes were red and bloodshot, and her father just looked pale and stunned at her words.

"Not come after you!" Hiccup exclaimed dumbfounded. Reaching out to take his daughter's hand in his own, his green eyes met with his little girl's sky blue, before he went on. "Siri, as soon as we realised you were missing, we went after you. We didn't care about the weather; all we cared about was getting you back. We searched all day, just hoping we can find some sign as to where you were. We called for you all day."

Siri took a sharp intake of breath in sudden realisation. "That was you I heard calling my name yesterday!" she squealed. "I wasn't wrong after all!"

"We heard you too, baby," Astrid sniffled. "The wind made it hard to find out where it was coming from though. We searched all day, and we only stopped when night fell...Even then daddy didn't want to stop."

"Really?" Siri asked in shock. "But..."

"But what, sweetie?" Hiccup said gently.

Siri looked at her parents miserably. "But...I thought you didn't want me around."

Astrid was stunned into silence at this admission. Hiccup opened his mouth to respond, but found no sound could come out. Both of them were as shocked as each other, before finally Hiccup found his voice again.

"What you made you think we didn't want you around?" Hiccup asked standing up off his chair, before he sat next to his daughter on the bed. Placing an arm around her shoulders, Siri tearfully looked up at her daddy.

"Because Leif just has to cry, and he gets attention," Siri sobbed. "I haven't spent \_any\_ \_time\_ with you or mummy since he was born... I thought if I ran away... it'd be easier." Siri did a great sniff, as she leant her head on her father's arm. "I thought you didn't want me anymore," Siri said quietly. So quiet, that both Hiccup and Astrid barely caught that last part, and when they did, they were stunned beyond all reason. Their daughter thought they didn't want her? Had they neglected Siri that bad?

"Baby, whatever made you think we didn't want you anymore?" Astrid said in a strained voice.

"Because you yelled at me," Siri said sadly. "You yelled at me for trying to help, and then daddy came home and was mad too. I didn't think you wanted me anymore, I thought you only wanted Leif."

"Siri, come here, sweetheart," Astrid said as she held out her arms to her. Siri eagerly obliged and she found herself sighing happily as she crawled into her mother's arms, resting her head on her mummy's chest. "Siri, listen to us, and listen very carefully" Astrid said softly. Siri lifted her eyes up and met them with both her parents' faces. "We weren't mad at you. We were frustrated because Leif had been crying a lot. Well I was. Daddy was just trying to help me. We never meant to make you think we didn't want you."

Hiccup nodded. "Just because we yell or get mad at times because mean we don't love you. Sure, Leif \_has\_ been getting a lot of attention lately, but it's only because he's a baby, a very loud baby. We never meant to leave you feeling so left out, that you felt you had to run away!"

Siri looked down into her lap sadly. "I thought you wouldn't care if I did."

"Wouldn't care?!" Astrid squealed, making her daughter jump. Wincing at the fact she'd scared her daughter, she said quieter. "Siri, when we found you this morning, you were so pale, I was scared for your life! We thought we were going to lose you...and if we did...I..." Astrid burst into tears.

"Siri," Hiccup choked out. "If we'd lost you in that storm, we would have died along with you... you are the most precious thing in our lives next to your brother, and we love you so much. If we'd lost you, our lives would be over. When we realised you'd run away, we never stopped searching, and we never would." Siri watched as her father's eyes begin to fill with tears once more, before they began to drip down his face, just like her mother's. "We love you so much, baby, and no matter what happens, we always will..."



Siri burst into tears. "I'm sorry, daddy, I'm so sorry!" Flinging her arms around her both her parents, she buried her head into her head into her mother's shoulder. Astrid brought her arms up to enclose around her daughter's small frame, hugging her for dear life, before burying her head into Siri's blonde locks. Siri felt as though she was being choked by how tight her parents were holding her, and she could feel her mother's tears dripping into her hair, but she made no move to stop them. All she wanted was for her parents to never let go, and as her tears soaked through her mother's shirt, she felt stupid for ever thinking her parents hated her in the first place. Why did she ever think that? Thinking back to the conversation her parents had given her when her mother was carrying Leif, she felt guilty. They had promised her then, that they would always love her, no matter what, so why had her faith in them diminished so much? Feeling guilty, it caused a new wave of tears to burst forth, and as Siri held onto her parents tighter, she could hear her father's voice.

"It's okay baby, it's okay," he hushed her gently, before she could feel his warm hand running through her hair gently. Sniffling loudly, she looked up at both her parents, tears still flowing down her face unchecked, and wasn't surprised to see that theirs were too.

"I'm so sorry for running away," she sobbed. "Can you forgive me?"

Her father gave a wide smile, before holding her hand in his tighter, while her mother breathed a laugh. "Of course we can, sweetie. But, will you promise us something?" Siri looked up at her parents faces to see fear still emitting from them, before she nodded.

"Promise us you'll never run away again," Astrid said gently, as she rested her hand on her daughter's cheek. "If you feel that way again, promise us that you'll talk with us first, even if you're scared. If we lost you again, I don't know what we'd do."

That promise was easy. She was never going to do something that silly again. Smiling, the little girl looked up at her parents with a serious expression. "I promise, mummy," she said, sincerity evident in her tone, as well as her face.

Astrid smiled in relief, before moving a strand of hair off her daughter's face. "I'm proud of you, sweetie. It's just we can't bear to lose you again."

"I know, mummy," Siri said gently.

"We love you, baby, no matter what. Don't ever forget that," Hiccup said as he gently wiped the tears on his daughter's face. Siri blushed at that, and playfully swatted her daddy's hand away, before looking away in embarrassment.

"I love you too," Siri said, as she wrapped her arms around her parents again, hugging them longer and tighter than ever before. She didn't want to let go of them, but before long, a yawn escaped her, which didn't escape her parents notice.

"Come on, sweetheart; let's get you back in bed. You need to rest," Astrid said tenderly, as she picked up the little girl off her lap, before placing her on the bed. Midnight moved over as her friend

buried herself under the covers, before curling up beside her once more. Pulling the blankets up over her, Astrid gave her a loving kiss on her forehead. "We'll just be in the next room, sweetie. We won't leave tonight."

"Mummy...can...can you and daddy stay with me for tonight...please?" the little girl asked timidly. She wasn't scared of being on her own, quite the contrary, she just wanted to know her parents were close by tonight.

'Sweetie, I don't think this bed will fit us all," her mother gently protested.

"Please, mummy?" Siri asked desperately.

Astrid looked at Hiccup, who had a sad smile etched on his face. Looking back at his wife, he gave her a nod, before walking over towards the bed.

"Alright, baby," Hiccup said softly, as he joined her on the small cot, while Astrid went the other side. It was cramped to say the least, but as they curled up beside their little girl, they could tell she was a lot more relaxed having them close by. Astrid rested her arm around her daughter, while Hiccup did the same, as he held his wife's hand placed on top of his daughter.

Siri smiled. "Thanks mummy," she said sleepily.

'Just sleep, sweetie. We'll be right here, I promise," Hiccup said quietly, as his little girl cuddled up to the both of them, before her eyes drifted closed. As she fell asleep, Hiccup and Astrid looked at each other with identical smiles on their faces, as Hiccup stroked his daughter's hair, before he reached out for Astrid's hand once more, bringing it to his lips in a soft kiss, making her blush.

"I love you," he said quietly. Astrid gave out a quiet giggle, shaking her head, before she answered back "I love you too." Looking down at their daughter's sleeping form, they both shifted into a more comfortable position before joining their little girl in slumber.

\* \* \*

><p>The family had awoken late the next morning, and had been immediately been forced into a large breakfast by a very stern and determined healer. Lagetha had then gone on to giving Siri a thorough check up, not once, but <em>three<em> times, before she was finally satisfied that the little girl was well enough to go home.

"I'm warning you now, though, Siri," Lagetha said firmly, as the family got ready to go home. "No running around and tiring yourself out for a few days. You are to \_rest,\_" Lagetha stressed. "You're still recovering, and I don't want your terrified parents bursting in here with you sick again, is that understood?"

Siri sighed. "Yes, Miss Lagetha."

"I'd listen to her too, Seer," Hiccup chuckled. "You don't want to be on her bad side," resulting in both a laugh from not just the healer, but Siri and Astrid as well.

"Alright, if you promise to rest, I will let you go home," Lagetha said gently to the 6 year old before turning to her parents. "Most of what she had is gone, and she'll be just fine. If she overexerts herself though, and starts to feel sick again, bring her straight back," she said firmly.

"She won't overdo it," Astrid promised, before turning to her daughter. "\_Will\_ you sweetie?"

Siri shook her head. "No, mummy," she said quickly.

"Alright then, you're free to go."

Sighing in relief, Siri went to walk out the door, when she was suddenly lifted into the air and into her father's arms. Giggling, she looked up at her father. "Daddy, I can walk myself!" she giggled as her mother laughed beside them.

"Not taking any chances of you overdoing it though, am I?" her father chuckled, resulting in a loud groan from the girl.

"You're so annoying, daddy!" she argued with a laugh.

"Not the first time I've been told that, baby," Hiccup said as he sneaked a peek at his wife, who gave a great snort and punched his shoulder lightly. Siri giggled at her parents, before resting her head on her father's chest contently, resulting in a wide smile from her father as he kissed the top of her head gently.

Upon walking out of the healer's house, they were met with a small crowd waiting outside. As they stepped out into the open, they all sighed in relief to see Siri in Hiccup's arms safe and well.

"Hey, Siri! How are you feeling?" Snotlout said with a smile, as he and the rest of their friends came over to them.

"Better, Uncle Snotlout," Siri replied with a smile.

"She's certainly better than she was yesterday, that's for sure," Astrid said with a shudder. Hiccup looked at her with a reassured smile, before placing his arm around her shoulders gently. Giving Hiccup a grateful smile, she suddenly saw Anna walking over to her, with a giggling Leif in her arms.

Siri's eyes widened. Her brother was giggling. She'd never seen him so much as smile, let alone giggle. Looking at her brother's happy face, she found herself beaming at the cute sight. Why couldn't her brother stay like this all the time?! Looking up at her father's face, she found that he looked just as surprised as her, as did her mother. It looks they hadn't seen him giggle like this either.

"Has he been like this the whole time?!" Astrid exclaimed in shock. Reaching out her arms for her son, he looked up at his mother and giggled even more, kicking his little legs as he entered her arms.

"Not the whole time I'll assure you," Anna said with a chuckle. "You're right in saying that he's a loud little thing. First night, it was me and Annika at my place with the kids, and he was the loudest of the lot." Astrid opened her mouth to apologise, but Anna

held a hand up to stop her. "Don't apologise, it was actually a good learning experience. The first night he didn't want to settle, and Annika and I were exhausted. If she didn't have to stay to nurse him, she probably would have gone home. It was lucky for us that we were so tired though, or we would have never figured out how to settle him," Anna said with a wide smile.

"You...You figured out how to settle him?" Astrid said astounded, looking down at the giggling baby in her arms.

"How in Thor's name did you do that?" Hiccup asked in shock.

Anna laughed. "It was a complete accident I assure you."

"We were tired," Annika interjected. "So, we both just lay in our rooms hoping he'd go back to sleep by midnight. We just didn't want to get up. Just as we were about too though, he just, stopped. When we checked on him, he was fast asleep"

"Stopped? He's never stopped for us," Astrid said, eyebrows raised.

"How long do you wait for?" Anna asked curiously.

Astrid looked at Hiccup, who shrugged thoughtfully. "I don't know; a few minutes maybe?" Hiccup replied.

"We waited 5, and then tried it for the rest of the night," Anna said. "If he stops crying, he's just being naughty, and if he doesn't, he needs something." Looking at Astrid's astonished look, Anna gave her friend a small smile. "Believe me we're as shocked as you are. It was a complete accident in finding that out"

Astrid shook her head in disbelief. "All this time, leaving him to see if there's anything wrong was the answer. Although, I don't think I'd feel right doing that all the time," she added anxiously.

"You don't have too," Anna said with a laugh, looking at her husband. "Snotlout here also found a solution last night. Show them, sweetie"

Snotlout chuckled, and pulled something out of his pocket, before going over to Astrid. Placing the object in front of the baby boy's face, Leif suddenly giggled and reached out his hands towards the object. It was a toy Monstrous Nightmare, similar to Siro's Nadder, and as soon as he had it in his hands, Leif was completely entranced by it.

Looking at Snotlout in amazement, he chuckled nervously. "I was trying to get him to settle, and I pulled out Lennart's old toy. Reached out for it straight away, and calmed down. Seems like he just wants a toy or something, which is weird, considering my boys never did at his age"

"We can't thank you two enough," Hiccup said appreciatively, watching his son play with the dragon doll. "We'll have to knit him one of his own," Hiccup said as he looked up at Astrid.

"No need," Snotlout said quickly. "Len doesn't play with that anymore anyway, and he gave it to me for Leif anyway, didn't you buddy?" he

asked as he looked down at his son, who nodded.

"Leif can have it, sir," he said. Then he looked up at Siri, still in her father's arms, and gave her a smile. "Hey Siri, do you want to come over and play?"

"Sorry Len, Siri's on strict orders to rest right now," Astrid said quickly. "Maybe in a few days."

"Sorry Lennie," Siri said with a grin.

"It's ok, you're sick," Lennart said understanding.

"Speaking of which, come on Seer, let's get you home," Hiccup said with a smile. Turning to everyone else, he and Astrid thanked them gratefully, before walking up the hill towards their house, trudging through the accumulated snow still on the ground. The day was very different to the previous few, with the sun out and shining down on them, with hardly a cloud in the sky.

Opening the door to the house, Hiccup immediately took Siri over to the wooden couch before gently placing her upon it.

"Daddy, I don't have to \_lie down\_! I just have to \_rest,\_" she whined, as her father placed a blanket over her. Toothless snorted at her as he came in, and gave her a 'don't you dare move look', making her pout. Midnight flew up on to her lap as she did so, making her give a small smile, as she patted the little dragons head.

"Lying down is resting to me, Seer. What do you think, Hiccup?" Astrid said with a grin, as she placed Leif in his downstairs cradle, along with his new toy.

"I'd say it is, milady," Hiccup said with a chuckle. When Siri pouted though, Hiccup sighed, and sat beside her, taking his hand in his gently. "Sweetie, it's just for a few days. We just don't want you getting sick again, that's all," Hiccup explained gently. "Just rest up and I promise you can be up and playing in no time, ok?"

Siri sighed, but gave a slight nod. "Yes, daddy."

Hiccup chuckled. "You're a stubborn little thing; I wonder who you get that from?" Hiccup said as he looked up at Astrid.

"What are you looking at me for?" she asked with a grin. "She's your daughter too."

Hiccup opened his mouth to retort back, when Leif's cries pierced the air. Siri tensed, as she watched her parents attentions go from her, to her brothers in one instant. With their attention on the young baby, Siri pouted for a second, before noticing a red shape on the ground underneath the cradle, out of her parents' sight. Siri threw the blanket off and gingerly stood up, her weight felt unfamiliar on her feet, surprising Midnight and sending her sprawling onto hiccup, causing Midnight to squeak in surprise and Toothless to grumble.

Reacting to the sudden yelp from Midnight, Hiccup began to speak; "Siri, sit back down, you'll wear yourself out," before being interrupted by Siri herself speaking, "I know what's wrong,

daddy".

Watching their daughter carefully shift her weight from one leg to another, Hiccup stopped Astrid from stopping her. As Siri neared the crib, she let herself fall to one knee slowly and picked up the stuffed dragon toy from under the crib. Handing it to her father, Siri grinned. "See? I said I knew what it was. I helped," she said cheekily.

Chuckling lightly, Hiccup passed the toy back to his daughter. "Why don't you give it back to him?" he said gently. Beaming, Siri took the toy back from her father and turned towards the cradle. Leif was kicking his legs and whimpering loudly, but as Siri dangled the toy over his cradle, he suddenly stopped. Looking up at the toy in his big sister's hand, he suddenly gave her a toothless smile, and giggled happily, stretching his hands out for the toy. Siri beamed at the baby, and handed the toy to him, before stiffening in surprise when Leif's little hand grabbed her finger instead. Looking into her brother's face, she saw he was looking up at her with wide eyes, before he gave a lilting laugh at her, refusing to let go off her finger.

"He's never done that before," Siri said in awe, as she kept her finger in his, as he continued to laugh.

"Maybe he's growing out of his screaming phase, Seer," Astrid said with a smile, as she placed an arm around her little girl's shoulders.

"Or he's just been teasing us all along," Hiccup said in amusement, as he moved the toy around Leif's line of sight, as he continued to giggle. His attention span soon went to his big sister though, and she looked up at her parents with an amused smile.

"Why didn't we try this earlier?"

\* \* \*

><p><em>Yay, I finally finished this plotline! It was amazing being able to write a drama storyline for once, and I admit I loved it lol. I know this chapter wasn't the best, but I had writers block and I tried my best to finish it well.<em>

\_Ok, next chapter Siri will be 7 and Leif will be 1, and the plotline was given to me by a guest a few chapters back when I asked for ideas :) When Leif gets picked on for being a clumsy walker, Siri sees red, and becomes VERY protective of her brother which she never thought possible. Hopefully it wont be as long as this chapter, but we'll see. Hopefully I'll have the chapter up quickly, because I want to write four more chapters before July 14 and I start my internship :)\_

\_Don't forgot to review! Remember, NO FLAMES are tolerated, but KIND constructive criticism is accepted as usual :)\_

\_Thanks for reading! \_

\_Sorry guys, this isn't the chapter I promised, but I realised a couple of hours after posting 'reconciliation' last night that I had completely forgot to add in a scene that I'd been planning for weeks :( I was devastated lol. So, today, I quickly wrote up this little one shot based the night after they took Siri home, just so I could incorporate it! I would have left it, but the thing is I needed to write this bit for a few reasons, plus I think its really sweet. Its only 2000 words long, but I hope you like it! :)\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 18: The Gift<span>

\* \* \*

><p>Siri had never felt so tired in her whole 6 years of life. As night began to slowly embrace the home, she could feel the events of the past few days began to catch up with her. Lying on the couch, she could feel her eyelids slowly begin to droop, and exhaustion wash over her as the room became darker and darker, with only the candles and the fire as a source of light in an otherwise darkened room. It had been a long few days for the little girl, and having done nothing but rest on the couch all day had made her sleepier than she could have ever imagined. She was just beginning to nod off, when she suddenly felt herself being lifted gently into the air, making her start as her eyes snapped open.<p>

"Ssh, it's just me, Seer," her father said gently, as held her tight in his arms. "You were falling asleep"

"No, I wasn't," Siri said with a cheeky grin. "I was bored."

Hiccup laughed. "Well your boredom sure looked an awful lot like sleep to me, sweetie. Not taking any chances now are we?" Reaching the girl's bedroom, he carefully pushed the door open, and entered the room. Midnight was already in there, and was dozing peacefully at the end of the bed, having left the young girl once she'd started to nod off. Careful not to disturb the little dragon, Hiccup gently placed Siri onto the bed, just as she emitted a great yawn.

"Wow, were you that bored, were you sweetie?" Hiccup said teasingly. Siri stuck her tongue out at her father, before she emitted a low giggle.

"I was lying down all day, daddy!" Siri exclaimed in fake devastation. "I was soooo bored!"

"Who's bored?" Astrid said as she stood in the doorway. Seeing Siri's pouting face though, she grinned. "Argh, mystery solved," she grinned as she came into the room.

"But it was boring, mummy! Sitting still is harrrrrrd," Siri drawled, as her parents tried to hide their grins, while her mother tenderly placed the covers up over Siri. "I bet daddy would hate sitting still all day."

"I do have to," Hiccup said dryly. "Two words. Council meeting," he said with foul look on his face, resulting in a fit of giggles from the 6 year old. Hiccup laughed with her before he looked up at his wife. "Leif asleep?" he asked.

"Yep," Astrid said a smile. "Hardly made a peep all afternoon, either. We owe Anna and Snotlout big time, looks like he's finally settled down," she added with relief.

"That'll be the first goodnights sleep we've had in ages, then," Hiccup chuckled. Turning his attention back to his little girl, he gave her a warm smile as he bent down and gave her a kiss on her forehead. "You just rest, sweetie. Mummy and I will check on you later on"

'But I've been resting all day," the girl whined. "If I sleep well tonight, can I play tomorrow?"

"No," Astrid answered firmly as she walked over and sat next to her on the bed. "Lagetha said you are to rest for a few days, no less. You don't want to get sick again do you?"

"But I feel fine. I'm just tired," Siri protested.

"Siri, \_please,\_ " Astrid said desperately. "You've gone through a lot the past few days. You may feel fine, but if you start exerting yourself too quickly, that may change" Looking into her daughter's eyes seriously, Siri found herself unable to look away as she listened. "You said you still feel tired, Seer, but do you still feel a little weak too?" Astrid asked her.

Siri opened her mouth to protest, but knew she'd be lying if she said no. Shaking her head, her mother nodded solemnly. "That's what I mean, sweetie. You have to rest up until you feel completely well, or what Lagetha thinks is well. You can't go doing things you can't like this. What you went through isn't a day's recovery," Astrid explained to her gently.

"It took me weeks to recover from my leg, sweetie. These things take time," Hiccup said patiently, as he sat next to his wife and daughter.

Looking at her parents worried faces, Siri suddenly felt a wave of guilt come over her again. She \_had \_been through a lot, and she did still feel a little sick. Resting may have been the most boring thing in the world, but from she'd heard from her parents when she was sick, she didn't want to scare them like that again.

"I'm sorry," Siri said quietly. Looking up at her parents faces, her face showed her guilt. "I'm sorry I scared you, and that I ran away. I was being silly, and I should have known that. Are you going to punish me?" Siri said sadly.

"Oh baby, no," Astrid said quickly, as she caressed her daughter's cheek gently. "No, we're not going to punish you. I think you've been punished enough. You're back home and that's all that matters." Wrapping her arms around her little girl, Astrid held her tightly, as Siri lay her head on her mother's chest. Hiccup joined in with the hug, wrapping his arms around his daughter as best as he could, while kissing her blonde hair firmly.

"I think being stuck lying around all day is punishment enough, Seer," Hiccup told her kindly. "We're not going to punish you."



"I guess so," Siri said miserably, as she cuddled up to her mother tightly.

Hiccup gave Astrid a worried look, before his eyes suddenly lit up. Pulling his arms away from his little girl, he stood up, and went over to the door. "I'll be back, sweetie. I have a little present for you," he smiled as he left the room.

Siri looked up at her mother with a confused look crossing her features. "What's daddy doing?" she asked. Astrid looked just as confused as her daughter, before realisation suddenly dawned on her, and she smiled.

"He's giving you a very special present early," Astrid said proudly.

Siri frowned, but saw her mother wasn't going to explain further, so she just waited patiently for her father to come back in. It didn't take long, as only a few moments later; he reappeared at the door, hiding something behind his back with a large smile upon his face.

"I know you feel bad, sweetie, but I hope this shows that we've forgiven you," Hiccup said gently as he sat down beside her again. "You're only 6, baby, and we all make mistakes. After everything that's happened the past few days, I think you deserve to have this now."

Siri watched curiously as her daddy pulled the object out from behind his back, and as it came into her line of sight, she squealed. Eyes lighting up, she looked at her daddy in excitement as he and her mother laughed, as he presented her with the gift. It was a headband.

The headband was made of stiff leather, and looking at it closely, Siri realised it was similar to her mothers. "This is for me?" Siri asked in awe, and Hiccup nodded at her with a warm smile. Looking back down to the headband in her hands, Siri ran her fingers over the details that had been carved into the leather. There were small, cut gems of shiny rock along the edges of the leather, and a pattern of Midnight, Toothless and Stormfly followed by her name in runes along the outer edge of the headband. Looking closer at the runes, she realised that her first name was separated from her middle and last names by the dragon pattern.

"I started to work on that when Leif was born," Hiccup said as he watched his daughter look over it. Hearing her daddy start speaking, she looked up at him, with a wide smile. "It was meant to be your Snoggletog gift, but considering everything's that happened the past few days, I think you deserve it now." Watching his little girl look back down at the headband, he smiled again. "Do you like it?" he asked softly.

Siri looked back up at her father, who was taken by surprise by the tears forming in the young girls eyes. Just as he was about to ask what was wrong, Siri suddenly flung her arms around her father's neck, hugging him tightly without choking him. "It's beautiful daddy! Thank you so much," she said, her voice croaky. "I always wanted a headband like mummy," she added, as she buried her head into her father's shoulder. Hiccup looked at Astrid with wide eyes, having not

expected this reaction, but as she looked back at him, tears once more filling her own blue eyes, he realised he should have expected it. She'd always wanted to be like her mother, and this headband made it even more so. Turning his attention back to his little girl, he gave a slight chuckle as he felt tears soaking through his night shirt, and he pulled his little girl closer, kissing the top of her head. "Easy there, baby, one might think you don't like the gift," Hiccup joked.

Siri breathed a short laugh, and looked up at her father's face. "I don't hate it, I love it daddy. It's amazing," she said happily, before she hugged her father once more. "I love you," she said into his shirt.

Hiccup's eyes filled with tears hearing this, and he pulled her closer to himself once more. "I love you too, sweetheart." Siri smiled into his shirt hearing this, before she looked up at her mother, who didn't know whether to cry or not. Seeing this, she giggled, and held out her arms for her mother as well. "Thank you, mummy," she said with a smile.

"I didn't make it, sweetie. Your father did all the work," Astrid protested with a smile. Not caring in the least though, Siri flung her arms around her mother as well, which Astrid didn't complain too as she wrapped her around her daughter's small frame. "It was still a gift from you \_and \_daddy," Siri replied happily. "I love you".

"I love you too," Astrid replied tenderly, as Siri let go of her and looked back to her father.

"Daddy, could you put it on for me?" she asked with a smile.

Hiccup smiled back at her, before taking the headband back from her. "Of course I can, Seer," he said as he fixed up his daughter's hair and carefully placed it upon her head. It fit perfectly. Not only that, but as Hiccup suspected, she was a splitting image of her mother.

"It's like looking in a mirror," Hiccup said a chuckle.

"I'll say," Astrid agreed with a laugh.

Siri's eyes lit up hearing that. "Really? Can I see?" she asked eagerly.

Astrid laughed. "I'll go get my mirror," she said as she quickly disappeared from the room and came back within a few moments with a small mirror in her hand. Holding it up in front of her daughter, Siri's eyes widened as she looked from herself to her mother, before she beamed proudly.

"I look like mummy!" she exclaimed excitedly. Then she looked back at the headband and gave a small frown. "What happens if I grow out of it?" she asked aghast.

Hiccup laughed gently. "I can easily fix it, Siri, don't worry." At those words, Siri instantly relaxed, and she smiled once more.

"Thank you, daddy," Siri said gratefully.

"Anything for you, baby," Hiccup said lovingly, as he stroked her fringe back out of her eyes, just like her mother had to at times. "I told you that you mean everything to us." Siri blushed at that, and looked down with a sheepish smile, before she suddenly gave an unintentional loud yawn. Blushing redder, Siri looked at her parents with a giggle.

"I think that's your cue to get some sleep, sweetie," Astrid said gently, as bent down and gave her daughter a kiss on her temple. Placing the covers back over her, she went to remove her new headband, at which Siri gave a squeak of protest.

"I want to keep it on, mummy!" she exclaimed quickly.

"Siri, it may be made of soft leather, but if you sleep with it on you'll get a headache," Hiccup explained to her patiently. "You only just got rid of your headache that you woke up with. I think it might be best if you took it off for the night," he said. Siri sighed, but allowed her father to remove the headband and place it on her bedside table, before he gave her a kiss on the cheek.

"Goodnight, sweetie. If you need us, just come into own room, alright?" Hiccup said.

"Yes, daddy," Siri said with a nod, before she allowed her mother to give her a tight hug.

"Sleep tight, baby," Astrid said, before she blew out the candle on the table. Siri heard her parents head for the door, and gently shut it behind them, before making their way next door into their room. When she heard their bedroom shut, she quickly fumbled around in the darkness for her headband. Finding it, she beamed into the darkness, before placing it upon her head once more, before turning over, pulling the covers close to her chin.

Headache or no headache, she was never taking that headband off again.

\* \* \*

><p><em>There you go guys, the scene I accidentally forgot to include. Still don't know how I forgot, but oh well. It's just this scene was needed because Siri's headband will be a big part of her and will be featured and mentioned quite often, so I had to include this :) I'm sorry it was so short, but I hope you liked it :)<em>

\_Next chapter WILL be the chapter I promised last time lol. Because I wrote this so quickly, I'm still on schedule to finish it on time too. \_

\_Thanks for reading! Don't forget to review! Remember, though, NO FLAMES.\_

## 19. Chapter 19: Like Mother, Like Daughter

\_I know, I'm posting a lot earlier than usual, but I was finished, so I thought why wait? :) Also, guys, THANKYOU SO MUCH. As of today I reached 103 follows on this story and I can honestly say I am

shocked! When I first started this fanfic, I never thought I would reach 20, let alone over a 100, so thank you so much for all your support behind this, you are all amazing! :)\_

\_Alright, just a heads up that Siri gets into a physical fight in this chapter with another kid. I know it probably doesn't bother many people, but if it does, don't worry, I wrote it so it sounds more like the rough and tumble kids fight it is, and not all out violent. Siri's only 7, I didn't want that, but I have to say, I like this chapter better than my previous few. I like how much of her mother she has in her :p\_

\_Anyway, enjoy the chapter! :)\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 19: Like Mother, Like Daughter<span>

\* \* \*

><p>"Leif, give it back!"<p>

"My!"

"It's not yours, it's \_mine\_. Now give it back!"

"No!"

"Leifffffff!"

Siri was furious. It wasn't out of the ordinary for Leif to take things that didn't belong to him, but this is where his sister drew the line. Not only had he taken something that wasn't his, but he had taken Sky, and \_no one\_ played with that doll other than her. Standing in front of her one year old brother, Siri looked down at him seething in anger.

"Give it back, Leif, that's not yours!" Siri demanded. Hearing his sister's voice, Leif looked up at her with an innocent face, before turning his attention back to the toy, without paying attention in the slightest. Balling her fists up in anger, Siri tried to retrieve the toy from him, only for Leif to suddenly place the doll into his mouth. Eyes widening with rage, Siri saw red, as she watched her precious dragon doll being slobbered and chewed on. That was it, no more miss nice Viking.

"GIMME IT BACK LEIF!" Siri screamed shrilly. Reaching down, she suddenly wrenched the dragon doll out of the young boy's mouth and out of his possession, hugging the toy close to herself. Looking down at her brother in irritation, her eyes widened in fear as his lip began to quiver, before suddenly bursting into tears.

"What's going on in here?!" Her mother's voice suddenly shouted. Siri suddenly tensed. Now she was in trouble. "What's with all the yelling?" her mother asked as she rushed down the stairs to pick up her screaming son. Her father soon followed, and looking between his hysterical son to his sheepish looking daughter, he crossed his arms with a frown.

"What did you do, Seer?" he asked firmly.

Siri huffed and got out her toy dragon to show her father. "Leif took Sky off me, and then decided to put it in his mouth!" she screamed angrily. Passing the drool covered doll to her father, she pointed her finger angrily at her still wailing brother. "He \_drooled \_on it; I had to get it back!"

"You mean you snatched it back?" Astrid said disapprovingly. "Siri, I don't care if he drooled on it or not, that is not how you get a toy off your brother."

"I don't care!" the girl yelled. "I told him not to play with it, and I always tell him that, yet he did it anyway!"

Astrid raised her eyebrows. "He's one Seer; you really think he'll listen?"

"HE TOOK MY DOLL!" Siri screamed. "He knows not to play with it, he just doesn't listen!"

"Siri Astrid Haddock!" Astrid exclaimed crossly. "Don't you dare scream at me like that" Siri's eyes widened as her mouth snapped closed. Her mother \_never\_ used her full name unless she was really mad, and at this point in time, she knew it was best to be quiet and listen. "Leif is only a year old, he plays with anything. He \_doesn't\_ know that it's not his, no matter what you think young lady. You know what they say; babies do what they want. If you didn't want him playing with it, don't leave it leaving around him, we've told you this a million times" Astrid said, her voice calming down the more she talked. "I know Sky is special to you, but don't blame your brother for something he doesn't mean to do. Do you understand me?"

Looking down at the ground, Siri mumbled something neither parent could hear. "What was that Siri?" Hiccup asked her firmly. Siri looked up at her father, and she sighed and repeated herself.

"Yes, daddy."

"Good. Now I want you to apologise to your brother," Hiccup said gently, as he looked over at his son still whimpering in his wife's arms.

"What?!" Siri protested. "But mummy just said he doesn't understand anyway, why do I have too?"

"He understands enough, Seer," Astrid said. "If he didn't, he wouldn't be crying still. I want you to come over here, and say you're sorry, and I want you to mean it"

Siri opened her mouth to protest again, but closed it once more seeing her father's stern look. Closing it again, she went over to her mother and brother and stood in front of them. Looking into her brother's tear filled green eyes, she sighed guiltily, before reaching up and taking his small hand in hers. "I'm sorry Leif, I was being mean" she apologised sincerely. Looking up to her brother once more, she saw a grin suddenly appear on his face as he reached out to touch her face.

"Siwi!" the 1 year old giggled.

"See, I told you he'd understand sweetie," Astrid said with a smile. "Now, do you two think you can get along for a few hours?" she asked hopefully.

Siri frowned. "Why?"

Astrid looked at Hiccup with a grin who looked back with a look of confusion upon his features. Astrid looked at Siri and then to Leif, and then suddenly a candle went off in his head. Grinning, he turned to his daughter.

"How would you like to take care of your brother for a few hours?" Hiccup asked her.

Siri raised her eyebrows. "Alone?"

"Well, with Toothless here of course, but yes, alone. Mummy and I have to go to a council meeting together, and we were going to get Gobber to babysit, but if you think you can handle it, we'll let you. You're 7 now, you can handle it," Hiccup said proudly. Then his face turned serious. "That means no fighting with each other though. If you even begin to fight, Toothless will come get me straight away, won't you bud?" Looking up at his best friend, Toothless gave a snort of approval, before nudging up to the young girl and his friend.

Not wanting to disappoint her parents, Siri sighed, but nodded. "I'll try," she promised.

"Good going, sweetheart," Hiccup said proudly as he kissed her blonde hair gently. Straightening up, he looked at his wife. "We better get going, sweetie. I don't want to be the one to explain to the Chief of the Shivering Shores why we're late," he said with a shudder.

"Me either," Astrid said quickly, as she placed Leif into Siri's arms, who groaned under his weight for a moment. Turning to her parents, her eyes suddenly widened in panic.

"What...What do we do all afternoon?!" she spluttered.

"Why don't you go for a walk around the village? Leif still has to get used to walking long distances anyway," Astrid suggested.

"He prefers to play outside too," Hiccup said. "Be careful though, there's other chiefs and their kids here today as well," he warned.

"Okay," Siri said nervously, as Astrid gave her a quick kiss goodbye, and as she walked out the door, turned back around. "Remember," she said. "NO fighting. We're counting on you to be a responsible big sister today, alright?"

"Yes, mummy," Siri said proudly, as her parents walked out the door. As the door shut behind them, the 7 year old looked at Toothless worriedly.

"Now what am I gonna do Toothless?"

Toothless gave a small grin at the girl before gesturing outside.

Siri looked down at her little brother, who was just sitting on the floor unsure of what to do. Knowing Leif would get bored just sitting around all afternoon, she nodded in agreement with the dragon.

"Hey, Leifey," Siri said brightly as she bent down in front of the toddler. "You wanna take a walk with me and Toothless?"

Leif looked up at his sister with bright eyes, before emitting a large grin. "Wor, Wor," he said eagerly, as he stretched out his arms towards her. Taking a hold of her brother's hand in hers, Siri helped her brother up, a little wobbly on his feet, but otherwise alright. Toothless quickly went to the toddler's side and stayed behind him as Leif took a few shaky steps forward, holding Siri's hand tightly. After a few more, he began to run for the door, only to find himself face first in the wooden floor.

Siri winced, waiting for the tears to come, but instead he giggled. Getting back up again, he looked up at the door hopefully. "Siwi!" he whined, trying to reach out for the door handle, but was nowhere near tall enough to reach, in the process falling on his bottom again.

Siri giggled and looked at Toothless, who seemed amused at the boy's antics. There was no doubt in either of their minds that this was Hiccup's son. The boy was clumsier than a new born dragon trying to find its feet.

"You're just like daddy, you know that Leifey?" Siri giggled, as she helped him up once more, before pulling the door open. Eyes alight with excitement, the boy went running off as soon as the door was opened, sending a wave of panic through his sister. "Leif, don't run away!" she yelled quickly. Slamming the door shut behind her, Siri went chasing after her hyperactive brother, only for him to be stopped by Stormfly, who had been dozing outside. The Nadder had picked the young boy up by the scruff of his shirt and was holding Leif above the ground, kicking and screaming desperate to get down. The sight of this made Siri double over with laughter as she pointed towards her brother.

"That will teach you to be naughty, Leif!" she laughed, watching her brother whining from above her. "Thanks Stormfly," Siri said gratefully, as the dragon suddenly lowered the young boy down. Leif went to make another break for it, only for Siri to quickly take his hand, and bend down in front of him. "No, Leif," she said trying to be stern. "You stay with me, okay?" Giving a small nod in understanding to his sister, Siri stood up once more, before leading her brother down the sloped cliff their house resided on, and down into the village.

The walk to the village was a slow one, given that Leif was a \_very\_ clumsy walker. He would trip over anything that got in his way, from a rock to a large stick. He would wobble on his feet, or sometimes even trip over if he walked too fast, but no matter how clumsy he was, Toothless and Stormfly remained behind the toddler to make sure he didn't fall backwards as he walked on. Siri continued to grip her brother's hand tightly as they ventured through the village, everyone smiling and waving at the pair as they walked on.

"It looks like the dragon protection squad here, lass," Gobber said with a chuckle as they walked past the forge. "I thought I was

babysitting you two, today?" Gobber asked with a look confusion crossing his face.

"Mummy thought I could do it myself," Siri said. "Plus it's my punishment for being mean to Leif," she added with a sigh.

Gobber raised his eyebrows. "Doesn't look like you're being punished to me, Seer," he said with a chuckle. "Looks to me you're enjoying yourself," he added with a sly grin at the 7 year old. Siri turned to look at the older Viking, before sticking her tongue out at him with a giggle.

"It would be if he wasn't so much like daddy!" she giggled. Just as if to prove his sisters point, the toddler quickly tripped over a stray tool in the forge, landing flat on his face once more.

Gobber winced. "I see what you mean, lass," Gobber said with a grin, as Stormfly picked the boy up by his shirt, setting him back on his feet. "He's his father's son alright. Thor help us having two Hiccup's in this village."

"His middle name is Hiccup," Siri pointed out, resulting in a laugh from the blacksmith.

"Yep, Thor help us all," he chuckled. "So, will you be right to keep going with Hiccup Junior there?"

Siri giggled as she watched her brother walking around the forge on wobbly legs. "I'll be fine, Uncle Gobber. Leifey's loving it."

"Alright, just be careful," Gobber warned gently. "There's some kids from the Shivering Shores here, and they're not used to socialising with us."

"I know," Siri said. "I'll be careful, I promise" Taking a hold of her brother's hand once more, Siri walked out of the forge, only to run into Lennart.

"Hey Seer!" he exclaimed cheerfully. "What are you doing?"

Siri beamed at her best friend. "Taking a walk with Leif," she said as she let go of the 1 year olds hand. Keeping an eye on her brother, both kids laughed as he tripped on a rock and went sprawling into the grass. "A clumsy walk anyway" Siri said with a giggle.

Lennart laughed. "Sig used to be like that. He got better when he got older."

"If he's anything like daddy, he'll always be like that," Siri beamed. "I think it's cute," she said proudly, as she looked over at her brother once more, before suddenly frowning. He wasn't too far away, and the dragons were watching over him, but Siri saw a group of 4 kids she didn't recognise hovering nearby. They were watching the toddler with an unusual interest, and the eldest of the group seemed to be pointing towards the little boy and laughing as he walked around, unsteady on his feet.

"Lennie; who are those kids?" Siri asked anxiously as she nodded her head towards them, trying not to draw their attention. Lennart



followed her line of sight, and upon seeing the kids himself, he frowned.

"Daddy said they're kids from the Shivering Shores," Lennart said.

"Are...Are they laughing at my brother?" Siri said angrily, as she watched the eldest of the group pointing once more at her brother.

Lennart looked over towards the group, and saw them begin to snigger at the toddler. There was no doubt as to what, or who for that matter they found hilarious. Looking back towards his friend, he saw her hands were balled into fists at her side and her lips pursed together as her eyes lit up with anger. Uh oh, Lennart thought, he knew that stance. That was the girl's 'I'm angry, don't mess with me' look, one that almost rivalled her mother's. Knowing trouble was ahead if she didn't calm down, Lennart reached for her hand in an effort to pull her away from the situation. "Let's go someone else, Siri. They're just being mean," Lennart said quickly. Siri turned around to see the worried look in the 6 year olds eyes, and she was about to nod in agreement, when she heard the eldest boy speak.

"Look at that kid," she heard him snigger. Wheeling around, Siri's eyes flashed in anger as she saw the 3 boys and 1 girl, all at least around the age of 10, all pointing and laughing at her brother's knobbly 1 year old walk. "Look at him" said the same boy with a horrid grin. "He can't even stand properly! I've never seen a kid so clumsy in all my life."

"Siri, don't!" Lennart said quickly, as she suddenly stormed over to the group of kids. She had a flash of anger in her eyes, as she stopped right in front of the kids with her arms crossed in front of her. Upon seeing her, they just gave her one look and began laughing at her, not intimidated by her in the slightest.

"What did you call my brother?" Siri asked angrily.

Feigning a look of surprise, the kid sniggered. "Oh, this is your brother? You must be so embarrassed," he grinned. "I've never seen a kid fall over so much in my life!"

"He's one," Siri stressed in annoyance. "He's still learning to walk long distances! Of course he's clumsy." Looking at the kid square in the eye; Siri pointed her finger at his chest. "I bet you were that clumsy at his age."

The boy snorted, as did the rest of the group. "Nobody's that clumsy. That kid's accident prone and always will be." Looking at the toddler being helped up by Toothless once more, the kid rolled his eyes. "He's so accident prone he needs a dragon to protect him, considering he probably won't be able to ride one without falling off!"

"He has been on Toothless before!" Siri said fuming. "He never fell off!"

The boy snorted. "Toothless, what type of a name is that for a dragon?" Looking towards Toothless, he raised his eyebrows. "Looks like an overgrown puppy to me, are your whole family wimps?"

"My daddy is the chief of Berk!" Siri screamed furiously. "Toothless is a Night Fury, and is not an overgrown puppy! He could beat you any day!"

The boy's eyes widened in surprise at this revelation, before scoffing once again. "That's the Chief's kid?" he laughed. "I bet he's real proud." Getting in the girl's face, he grinned nastily at her. "Unless your daddy's as clumsy as him, then no wonder he's as bad"

For the second time that day, Siri saw red. This time though, it wasn't a silly reason. Fuming, Siri pushed the boy back angrily. "DON'T YOU EVER TEASE MY BROTHER OR MY DADDY AGAIN!"

Unfazed by the girl's anger, the boy's smirk remained on his face. "Ohhh, I'm so scared, a girl thinks she can fight-" The boy was cut off as he was suddenly bowled over by a sharp blow to his face. Looking up in shock, he saw that Siri's fist was up in the air, her eyes flashing with anger.

"Still think a girl can't fight?!" she yelled in fury. "You will never be mean to my brother again!"

Siri was suddenly knocked back. Blinking in shock, she realised the boy had pushed her over with a smug look on his face. Getting to her feet quickly, she went to retaliate when Lennart tried to hold her back.

"He's just being mean, Siri, don't fight him!" he pleaded, resulting in a smug look from the older boy.

"You better listen to your little friend there, Siri. Obviously he knows you can't win, if you're anything like you're clumsy brother over there-"

Screaming in anger, Siri suddenly charged the boy, knocking him to the ground. Quickly getting back to his feet, he winced as Siri threw a half-hearted punch at him, connecting with his nose. Yelling in pain, he lost his balance, pulling her down with him. After they landed heavily on the ground, the boy tried to get a grasp of Siri's hair. Feeling her headband, he began to tug at it, at which Siri yelled out in anger. How dare this kid touch her headband? Swinging her arm back again, Siri was suddenly tripped over as the boy's foot came in contact with her shins. Landing hard on the ground, Siri acquired several grazes which stung and throbbed like a bee's sting. Undeterred, she stood up and knocked the boy back to the ground, both children rolling around in the dirt, trying, but failing, to land a punch on each other. Neither of them had been in a fight before, and it showed as they threw half- hearted blows towards each other.

Hearing the commotion, a number of village kids, Berkians and from other tribes alike began to rush over to the scene. After noticing just who was fighting, many of them began chanting, "Fight, Fight, Fight" as Siri pulled at the boy's hair and even managed an accidental blow to the boy's eye. Returning the favour, Siri felt his fist come in contact with her eye as well, she yelled in pain. As it began to water, she could just make out the black blur of Toothless as he raced past her. She didn't have time to wonder about it as she

tried to avoid the boy's wimpy blows.

"Take back what you said about my brother!" Siri screeched at him.

"Why should I? It's true!" he yelled back angrily.

Infuriated by the boy, Siri went to knock the boy over again, when she suddenly heard a lull in the crowd's chanting. About to look up and find out what was going on, she suddenly felt a pair of arms around her waist, pulling her back from the boy.

"Siri Astrid Haddock, what do you think you're doing?!"

Siri stiffened. Looking around in alarm, she saw the arms around her belonged to none other than her father, who had a look of shock plastered on his face. Next to him, her mother was staring at her with wide eyes and open mouthed, as she held Leif tightly in her arms. Looking back at the boy she'd been fighting, her face paled as she saw the boy being pulled up from the ground by none other the Chief of the Shivering Shores. Siri's face paled. Had she been fighting the Chief's kid?

"Siri, what in Thor's name were you doing!" her father yelled anxiously. "We didn't raise you to fight for no reason, what were you thinking?!"

"He started it!" Siri replied quickly, as she pointed towards the boy, who scoffed and looked up at his father.

"\_She's\_ the one who knocked me over, I didn't do anything!"

"No I didn't, you were being mean!"

"ENOUGH!" the Shivering Shores chief boomed. Looking at Hiccup, his eyes were filled with anger, as he looked down at Siri. "Is this how you teach your kid to behave? By fighting my son for no reason!"

Hiccup's eyes glinted with anger at the accusation towards his daughter, but he kept his feelings hidden. "I'm sure it's just a misunderstanding, sir, Siri wouldn't have started a fight without reason, surely?"

The Chief scoffed. "Well I highly doubt my son would have started it, so it had better be a damn good explanation!"

"It is!" Siri protested. Looking up at her disappointed parents, she pointed towards the other kid. "He was teasing Leif, daddy! Leif was walking around being a little clumsy and he started to laugh at him," Siri said angrily. "He said Leif was a wimp. He kept teasing him and teasing him, daddy, he wouldn't stop" Looking at the other Chief, Siri held her head high, and looked at him without fear. "Your son was being mean, sir. I was just trying to protect my brother," she said defensively.

The Chief opened his mouth to retort, but no sound came out. He had never known a 7 year old to be so brave in speaking with him like that. Looking down at his son, he noticed the boy wouldn't meet his gaze as he looked down at the ground. It looks as though the girl was

telling the truth. Arms folded angrily, he gave his son an infuriated glare.

"Is this true, boy?" he asked sternly. The boy huffed in annoyance, but as he nodded, the Chief growled in anger. "No more trips away from home, for you then, boy, until you know how to behave. Do you understand?"

"Whatever," his son said. Looking back up at Siri, his eyes narrowed at her in anger, before he stormed off with the group of boys. The Shivering Shores Chief gave an apologetic look towards Hiccup, before he followed after his son, leaving Siri speechless.

"He didn't even say sorry!" Siri said in annoyance.

"That's the Shivering Shores people, Seer. They're not known for that," Hiccup explained, before he suddenly frowned. "But you, young lady, will be saying sorry to him later on, as well as being punished for fighting in the middle of the village".

Siri gave her father an incredulous look. "But daddy, he was being mean to Leif, I was trying to protect him!" she protested.

"That's still no excuse for fighting, Siri," her mother said. Siri looked up at her mother, speechless. Were they really going to punish her for trying to protect her brother? "You should have come to us to deal with it, instead of trying to beat the kid up. We haven't raised you to beat someone up just because they said something hurtful" Astrid told her sternly. Siri went to retort, but she stopped when she thought she saw a glint of pride in her mother's eyes, which quickly disappeared. Siri blinked, thinking she'd imagined it, and as she did, she heard her father talking once more.

"I know you were trying to protect Leif, sweetie, but it's still no excuse for fighting," Hiccup said firmly. "Especially when that fight results in my daughter getting a black eye," he said gently. "Or what looks like one about to come up, anyway"

Siri gasped, and held her hand up to her eye, resulting in a wince. Yep, she was going to have one alright.

"Not only that," her mother said, "but you also gave the chief's son one too, as well as a bloody nose. I don't care what he said, Siri, but that is not on." Looking thoughtful, Astrid sighed. "You're grounded, Siri. One week at home, no leaving the house, except to use the bathroom"

Siri's eyes filled with tears with anger. "Mummy, that's not fair!" she screamed. "I was just being a good sister and sticking up for Leif. Why do I have to be grounded for so long!" she exclaimed.

"Because you started a fight, and injured yourself and him," Astrid said quietly. "Plus you made a spectacle of yourself in the middle of the village."

Looking around the village, Siri noticed that almost all the village was there still. Blushing red, Siri looked down as the tears in her eyes spilled onto her cheeks. Wiping at them furiously, she looked up at Lennart, who gave her a look of sympathy.

"I'm sorry, Siri," he said gently.

She sighed. "It's okay, Lennart," she said quietly. "I'll see you in a week." Looking up at her parents, she took her father's hand he was holding out to her, as he led her back to the house in silence. As they went through the village, there were hushed whispers of surprise, and admiration, for Siri, considering she had almost won a fight with a 10 year old, who was bigger and musclier than her. All for her brother. Although she needed to be punished, many of them thought a week was too much, considering she had been very brave in what she'd done. She was becoming more like her mother by the day, in strength and determination. If that was who she was growing up to be, the village would have another strong leader after her father and grandfather.

As the little family reached the house, Stormfly suddenly gave out a squawk of sympathy as she nuzzled the girl gently. The Nadder had seen the whole unfortunate incident, and knew it wasn't the girl's fault. Able to tell this, Siri looked up at the dragon with a sad smile.

"Thanks, Stormfly," she said with a sigh, as she followed her mother inside. Keeping her eyes lowered to the ground, the young girl was about to go up to her bedroom, when she suddenly felt a pair of arms wrap around her. Startled, she wheeled around only to find herself face to face with her mother, who pulled her close into a tight embrace, a glint of pride in her eyes. Siri's eyes widened in shock; she hadn't been imagining that earlier! Bewildered, Siri frowned and looked up at her parents in a state of confusion.

"I thought you were mad at me?" she asked, perplexed.

"Well we are...sort of," Astrid said slowly. "But we'd be hypocrites if we told you never to fight when I used to all the time..."

"Still do," Hiccup chuckled quietly.

Astrid nodded. "Yes and still do. When I was your age, I used to beat up Snotlout all the time for annoying me, so telling you that you shouldn't for a reason like this, would be hypocritical." Looking at her daughter, she suddenly gave a large smile. "Although I don't excuse what you did...especially in the middle of the village... I will admit, I'm proud of you, sweetheart." Holding a hand to her daughter's cheek, Siri beamed at her mother. "What you did today for your brother was very sweet, and I have to admit, I probably would have done the same thing if I could..."

"But-" Hiccup interjected, which had Siri quickly turn to look at him. "Picking a fight still isn't the best way to go by it, especially with an older kid from another village. A little harmless rough and tumble, or a teasing punch to the shoulder, like your mother does-" Hiccup grinned at his wife, who snorted, and did just that. "-isn't a problem. When it comes to what you did today though, we have to step in. Do you understand, sweetie?" Hiccup asked her gently.

Siri sighed. "Yes, daddy," she said. "I didn't mean to fight, but the boy was being so mean to Leif." Looking at her brother in her mother's arms, she frowned. "I know I was mean to him this morning,

but what he said was really mean, and then he was teasing me and you, daddy. I got angry," she said defensively.

"You don't need to defend yourself, Seer, we understand," Hiccup said quickly. "We know you were doing in for your brother, and you are really sorry, so we're downgrading your punishment"

Siri looked up at her parents in shock. "You mean it?!" she exclaimed joyfully.

"Only if you promise to apologise to both the Chief and his son," Astrid said with a frown. "I know he was in the wrong more by teasing Leif, but by apologising, you will show great maturity." Astrid looked at Hiccup with a foul look on her face. "Even if he doesn't deserve it," she muttered which both Hiccup and Siri heard and started to laugh, before Siri heaved a great sigh.

"I'll say I'm sorry, mummy, I promise," Siri said. "Even if I don't want to," she grumbled.

Hiccup and Astrid both snorted at that remark. "I think somebody has too much of her mother in her," Hiccup teased, resulting in amused look from Astrid.

"Oh, really?" Astrid said with a grin. "Like mother, like daughter you say?"

"Gods, yes," Hiccup chuckled.

Astrid chuckled as well, before turning her attention back to her daughter. "Alright, if you apologise to them tonight if we invite them over, we will put your punishment down to three days. How does that sound?"

Siri's eyes lit up. "Better than a week!" she said happily, as she flung her arms around her mother, resulting in a laugh from both her and her father. As she let go of her mother though, she was given a stern look.

"Just because we're letting you off lightly, doesn't mean we want this to happen again in a hurry either, Seer. If something like this happens again, I want you to come to me or daddy. Don't handle it yourself. Do you understand?" Astrid said firmly.

"Yes"

"Good," Astrid said, before she slowly frowned. "Looks like that eye of yours is going to be one heck of a shiner," she sighed. "Come on, let's go put something on that" Looking down at the girl's cuts and scrapes, she shook her head. "And on those," she added, before looking at Hiccup. "Can you take Leif while I go fix up these injuries, sweetie?" she asked.

"Of course I can," Hiccup chuckled as he took Leif in his arms with a smile, before Astrid took a hold of Siri's hand. Taking her upstairs, Astrid grabbed a few healers' ointments from the cupboard, before taking her upstairs to the washroom. As the door closed behind them, Hiccup looked at his son with a smile, who was completely oblivious to the trouble his sister had caused for him. "You little buddy are going to be a lot of trouble, do you know that?" he asked the

toddler, who emitted a giggle as his daddy tickled him. Eyes widening in realisation at what he just said, Hiccup gave a sigh, but couldn't help laughing.

"Forget like mother, like daughter," Hiccup said with a chuckle. "Try like father, like son!"

\* \* \*

><p><em>As you can see, no I don't condone violence, but it would definitely be hypocritical of Hiccup and Astrid to tell her not to fight considering everything they, well, mostly Astrid, has done. Plus you sort of can't blame Siri for getting angry either I guess. Let's just say though this won't be the first fight this girl will get into in her life. Like Mother, Like Daughter indeed lol.<em>

\_Ok, my next chapter will be one of four parts, and will be apart of a flashback series! It's Hiccup and Astrid's 10th wedding anniversary and an 8 year old Siri asks her parents about the early days in their relationship. You are going to see the things I missed out on in this series, such as Hiccup's proposal to Astrid, their wedding, a very funny story on what happened on the final night of their wedding celebrations (as hinted at in the chapter when Astrid discovered she was pregnant with Leif) and when they discovered Astrid was pregnant with Siri :) I've been looking forward to this storyline for AGES, so I'm super excited to be up to it!\_

\_\*\*DON'T FORGET TO REVIEW!\*\*\_ I went down to only 4 reviews last chapter which was sort of upsetting I'll admit, especially when I got 16 just a few chapters before. Just remember though, NO FLAMES, but KIND constructive criticism is accepted. \_

\_Thanks for reading! :) \_

## 20. Chapter 20: How to Propose

\_Anyway, guys, thankyou so much for your reviews last chapter! :D I beat my review record again of 18 reviews! Thankyou so much, it meant a lot. Plus 118 follows is even better. Let's see if we can beat that again lol! \_

\_Ok, this chapter starts in the present, before going to a flashback, and the first flashback is Hiccup's proposal to Astrid! Hope you all like it! But I'll tell you, Hiccup messes up big time at first :p \_

\_Also, I know the chapter name is different in the search box to what it actually is, but it's only because it wouldn't let me write it all! The chapter title was named thanks to my boyfriend, who, despite editing my chapters for so long, has never had a chance to name a chapter, so this is what he came up with!\_

\_Enjoy the chapter!\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 20: How to Propose to Your Viking Girlfriend<span>

\* \* \*

><p>"Surpwise, Surpwise!"<p>

"Ssh, Leif, don't wake mummy and daddy up yet!"

Siri hesitated outside her parent's bedroom door, listening for any sign that her brother's yelling had woken them up. Hearing nothing, the 8 year old grunted as she tried to wedge the door open with a large portrait in one hand and her brother's hand enclosed in the other. Unable to open the door, she sighed and placed the portrait against the wall, before slowly opening the door and peeking in. Seeing her parents were still asleep, she quickly turned to 2 year old Leif, and put a finger to her lips.

"Be very quiet, Leifey," she whispered, as they tip toed into the room. "They can't wake up yet. You remember what to say?"

"Happy-!"

"Ssssh!" Siri hushed him quickly, as she covered his mouth. "Not yet!"

Shaking her head in frustration, the girl quickly grabbed the large portrait from the hallway before dragging it in the room. Propping it up against the bed with a grunt, she quickly turned to her brother, whose eyes were wide with excitement.

Keeping a finger to her lips, Siri quickly went around to the side of the bed, before ushering her brother to follow her. Standing beside her mother's sleeping form; she suddenly grinned and nodded to her brother to proceed with the plan. Eyes wide with excitement, Leif happily obliged, and joined in with his sister as they yelled-

"Happy Anniversary, mummy and daddy!"

"Happy Annie, Happy Annie!"

Astrid and Hiccup sat bolt upright in bed, almost bowling over their children, and sending their blanket flying. Seeing Siri and Leif off to the side of their bed with giant, moon-like grins, Astrid's hand came to rest over her heart faintly; "What in Thor's name were you thinking?!" she half-uttered under her beleaguered breath.

Catching his own breath, Hiccup retorted "Well, that's certainly one way to scare the wits off someoneâ€|" Looking over at Toothless, he saw the dragon was looking at him with an innocent expression, but he couldn't hide the fact that he himself was hiding a grin. Hiccup shook his head, and looked at his still surprised wife. "The useless reptile was in on it," he said, before he and Astrid finally gave a laugh. Looking back to his giggling children, Hiccup chuckled. "What were you two thinking?!" he said with a laugh. "You almost scared us halfway to Valhala!"

Siri bit her lip, before she burst into fits of giggles. "Leif...and I...were trying to wish...you a happy anniversary!" she said through giggles.



"You could have just knocked on the door," Astrid said, with a hand still to her heart. With a smile appearing on her lips, though, she suddenly held out her arms for her daughter, who beamed and happily obliged as she climbed up on to the bed next to her mother. "But thank you anyway, sweetie, it was a nice thought," Astrid said with a smile, and Hiccup nodded in agreement with his wife.

"Thank you, sweetheart," Hiccup said with a smile at his daughter, before turning to look at his wife, taking her hand in his. "We made it 10 years," he said proudly, before suddenly giving a chuckle. "Well, more importantly, you've put up with me for 10 years".

"And what a \_long\_ 10 years it's been," Astrid replied cheekily.

"Hey!" Hiccup retorted with a laugh, before he suddenly pulled his wife in for a kiss. Startled, Astrid went to protest about the kids watching, but suddenly found herself not being able to. Leaning into the kiss, Astrid wrapped her arms around Hiccup's neck before closing her eyes. Siri stuck her tongue out, and looked away at the display her parents were making, but made no move to interrupt. It was her parent's anniversary after all. The same couldn't be said for her brother though, whose face scrunched up in disgust.

"EWWW!"

Hiccup and Astrid broke off their kiss, with a laugh, as they looked down at their two year old son. "Was that gross, buddy?" Hiccup asked him with a grin.

"Yes," he answered, sticking out his tongue. Hiccup laughed once more, before moving to pick up his son and place him on the bed with the rest of the family. As he did so, he finally noticed the portrait leaning up against the bed frame. Curiously he looked towards his daughter who had a wide excited look on her face as her father spotted the present at last.

"Is...Is that for your mother and me?" he asked her. With a nod, she went to get off the bed to retrieve it, when her mother held out an arm to stop her.

"We'll get it, sweetie, don't worry," she said quickly, as she and Hiccup got up to take a glance at the portrait. Stopping in front of it, Siri bit her lip nervously; anxious as to how they would react when they saw it. As her parents finally looked upon it, though, she was taken aback as her mother suddenly brought a hand to her mouth in a sob. Her father stood in silence, before he looking at her, tears filling his own eyes.

"When...When was this done, baby?" he asked quietly.

Siri smiled. "Bucket painted it. He spent \_ages\_ on it. I said I wanted to get you something for your anniversary, and Grandma suggested a portrait," she explained, before she began to twist her hands around in her lap nervously. "Do you like it?" she asked.

Hiccup and Astrid looked at her and Leif with the biggest smiles they had ever seen. "Sweetie, it's beautiful," Astrid said, her voice

cracking a little. "Thank you so much". Holding out her arms for her daughter, Siri quickly jumped off the bed and into her arms, as her mother hugged her tightly. Leif pouted and huffed in annoyance before Hiccup chuckled and picked his son up, holding him close. Pulling away from her mother's hug, Siri looked proudly upon the portrait that Bucket had agonised over for weeks on end.

The portrait had been painted on vellum, with every member of the Haddock family being present; Hiccup was in the centre, standing proudly; Astrid by his side, axe in one hand, her husband's hand in the other. Stormfly and Toothless were also present, off to the side of their respective rider; Toothless was rearing back on two legs, his wings inlaid with swirls and whorls of colour; Stormfly's wings were outstretched, crying at the sky; her scales had been filled in with sparkling rock. At the feet of their parents, Siri stood and Leif sat an arm around their parent's legs'. In the background had been lightly sketched the entrance to the great hall, with Stoick's statue proudly looking down on the family. The entire piece must have taken Bucket weeks to paint - and none of them had even sat for it!

"This must have taken Bucket \_ages,\_" Hiccup said in awe.

Siri giggled. "It did, daddy. He kept freaking out when he missed up one little thing, but he never wanted to give up." Looking up at her parents, the little girl beamed proudly. "So, you like it?" she asked happily.

"We love it baby, thank you," Astrid said proudly, as she bent down and hugged her daughter tightly, before standing up and kissing her sons cheek as well.

"I know where this is going," Hiccup said, as they made their way downstairs, portrait in hand. Stopping near the front door, Hiccup placed the new portrait alongside two others: one of his parents and the other of Astrid and himself on their wedding day, both residing on the same wall.

Looking up at the portrait of her parents on their wedding day, Siri suddenly gave a frown. She had looked upon this picture every day since she was a baby, yet not once had she asked her parents about their wedding day, and or the early days of their relationship. By Thor, she didn't even know how her daddy had proposed! She had worried for weeks over to what to get them for their anniversary, yet the little girl didn't even know how it had all come to be in the first place. Overcome with curiosity, Siri found herself wanting to know \_everything. \_

"Daddy, how did you propose?"

Hiccup tore his eyes away from the portraits to look down at his daughter, a look of surprise etched upon his face. He never expected that question from his daughter at that moment, but as he thought back that day, he suddenly found himself smiling widely at the memory.

"That's something I haven't thought about in awhile, sweetie," he said with a wide smile.

Astrid snorted. "I certainly have," she said. Looking at her

bewildered husband, she suddenly found herself giggling. "It's not something you can easily forget, that's for sure!"

Hiccup crossed his arms, with an amused look appearing on his face. "Oh come on sweetheart, it wasn't that bad," he said with a grin. "It turned out for the best, didn't it?"

"Yeah, after you almost messed the whole thing up!" Astrid giggled. "I'd never thought anyone could mess up a proposal that badly!"

Hearing the banter between her parents, Siri's eyes widened as she looked up at her amused father. "What did you do, daddy?" she asked in amusement. Feigning hurt; her father huffed and looked at his wife and daughter.

"I didn't do anything!" Hiccup insisted. "I was just really nervous. Now do you want to hear this or not, sweetie?" he said with a chuckle.

Siri giggled, as she nodded eagerly. Running over to the couch, she threw herself down upon it, impatient for the story to start. Hiccup couldn't help but laugh as he sat beside the eager eight year old, with Leif sitting on his lap. Once Astrid sat down, Siri crawled into her lap before looking up at her parents, waiting for them to begin.

"What do you want to know, Seer?" Astrid asked her with a smile.

"Everything," Siri said, her voice filled with excitement.

Hiccup looked at Astrid with wide eyes, as they both laughed. "Everything, huh?" Astrid said with a wide smile. "Well that may take awhile, but here goes..."

\* \* \*

><p>Waves crashing onto the cliff wall and the wind blowing through the tall grass were the only sounds Astrid could hear as she arrived at the small cliff. Away from the bustle of the village, Astrid closed her eyes and took a sigh of relief at the near silence around her as she lay down on the grass of the cliff, waiting for Hiccup to show up. He'd asked her to meet her there just before sunset, and considering how little she'd seen of him lately, Astrid had been quick to accept his offer.<p>

She knew it wasn't his fault she'd barely seen him. It had barely been a month since he'd become thrust in to the sudden responsibility of being Chief of the entire village, as well as the whole incident with Drago. Still getting used to the job and what it required, Hiccup suddenly found himself busier than he'd ever been, and Astrid found her time with her boyfriend getting less and less as each day passed. Time with each other was few and far between, and Astrid found herself missing his company. Sure, she had Stormfly and their other friends, and even Valka, who the young woman had formed a strong bond with over the past month, but she couldn't help feeling lonely at the fact that she had been seeing Hiccup less and less, especially over the last week alone. Hopefully today, that would all change and that they could spend an afternoon together, with no

problems or duties whatsoever. Astrid was snapped out of her reverie, once she heard her boyfriend's voice.

"Well, good afternoon milady"

Astrid sat up, with a wide grin stretched across her face. "Good afternoon yourself, oh wise leader," she said cheekily, as she rushed forward to envelop him into her arms. "What have you been up to lately?"

Hiccup shrugged with a grin at the young woman. "Oh, you know, running a village, hearing people complain, having no time to myself, same old same old" Hiccup grinned, before he was suddenly taken by surprise as Astrid's lips met his in a sudden kiss. Although startled, Hiccup quickly closed his eyes and responded back, wrapping his arms around his girlfriend's waist and pulling her closer to him, as he kissed her back with as much passion as he possessed, before Astrid suddenly pulled away.

Hiccup grinned at her. "Wow, if I knew you missed me that much, I would have asked you to come here a lot sooner"

"You could have snuck away," Astrid said. "No one would have noticed, surely"

"Oh, they would have noticed," Hiccup muttered to himself. "Anyway, I asked you here for a reason anyway. This isn't just a random meeting," Hiccup said nervously.

Astrid frowned. "Oh, really? So you didn't just want to spend the afternoon with me?" Astrid said, hurt evident in her voice.

"Well, it wasn't just that," Hiccup said quickly. "I'd been meaning to talk to you about something for awhile is all, and I thought this was the best time and place to do it"

Astrid's eyes narrowed. "Talk to me about what?" she asked worriedly.

Hiccup eyes widened anxiously, and he suddenly began to turn redder by the minute, as he fumbled to find the right words to explain. "Well...you see...um...what I mean to say is...Astrid you know I love you right?"

"Yes," Astrid said slowly, curious as to why Hiccup was acting so nervous.

"Yes...well, um...you see...ever since I became Chief, I've been thinking. Well, we've been seeing each other for about 5 years now, and we've been through a lot together. You know I love you, but the thing is...you see...oh this hard," Hiccup said with a sigh.

Astrid eyed Hiccup suspiciously, as he wrung his hands, trying so hard to explain just what it was he wanted to say. It was something he did when he was really nervous, which just had the young Viking warrior worrying even more. What could possibly have Hiccup, of all people, so nervous? Listening to Hiccup's anxious rambling though, her eyes widened in horror as she realised exactly what he must have been thinking, and she didn't want to hear it.

"You see Astrid, we've been together for a long time, and a Chief has his duties, to his people and himself," he said, taking a deep breath. "Oh, how can I say this? Astrid..."

"You're breaking up with me"

"I love y...wait...what?"

"You want to break up with me, don't you?!" Astrid exclaimed in anger. "After \_everything \_we've been through together, you bring me up here to \_break up \_with me!"

"Astrid, you've got the wr-"

"How could you?!" Astrid screamed hysterically as her anger rose. It was like Hiccup hadn't even spoken. "After 5 years, supporting you, being there for you, especially over the past month, you're going to break up with me, without as much as a reason!"

"Astrid, you don't understand-" Hiccup said fearfully.

Astrid's eyes narrowed. "\_What \_don't I understand, Hiccup? That I've spent 5 years with a boy, no, \_man\_ that I loved, and now he expects me to understand why he's breaking up with me just like that!"

"Astrid, that's not what I mean-"

"It's for some stupid noble reason isn't it?" Astrid demanded furiously, eyes flashing dangerously. "You don't want to burden me with your duties to the village, is that it?"

"Astrid, please, you don't understand," Hiccup said desperately, as he looked from his irate girlfriend to the scene behind him. He was edging dangerously close to the edge of the cliff as Astrid advanced towards him, angrier than he's ever seen her and without Toothless there, he was a goner if he lost his footing right about now.

"Am I not good enough for you, then?!" Astrid asked tearfully. "As Chief, do the council expect you to marry a girl from another village?"

"I want to \_marry you\_!" Hiccup burst out. Upon realising what he'd just said his face suddenly burned as hot as a dragon's flame as he looked up at Astrid's face. Her face too, was turning a bright shade of red, as her tear filled eyes widened in shock as she tried to comprehend what Hiccup had just told her.

"W...What?" Astrid stammered in shock, unsure if she'd heard that properly.

Hiccup sighed. Taking Astrid's hands in his own, he looked into Astrid's still tearful eyes. "I want to \_marry you,\_" he repeated softly, as he tucked a piece of hair behind her ear. "That's what I've been trying to say this whole time"

"But..." Astrid said slowly. "...But you said something about a Chief having a duty to his people..."

"And himself," Hiccup said gently. Squeezing Astrid's hands tighter,

he sighed. "I may have a duty to our people, Astrid, but as Chief I also have a duty to myself. To make sure the people in my life are happy, and that I'm happy." Looking into Astrid's wide eyes, Hiccup's nerves slowly began to vanish, and as he continued to speak, everything he wanted to say to her suddenly came flooding back to him. "Astrid, I love you. Before we made peace with the dragons, I never thought I'd have a chance to be with you, but after we did, you made me happier than I'd been in a long time."

"I'm not that interesting," Astrid said, with a giggle. "But keep going," she grinned.

Hiccup laughed. "Astrid, you were the first to accept and support me with the dragons, and I know you'll be there until the end. We may have been a couple for only 5 short years, but to me it feels like a lifetime" Astrid blushed as she looked into her boyfriend's eyes with a warm smile. "You've been my biggest supporter in this time, and been by my side through everything...especially over the last month..." Hiccup trailed off, as tears began to fill his own eyes.

"Oh, Hiccup," Astrid said softly, as she reached up to cup his cheek. Hiccup closed his eyes in an effort to stop the tears from escaping, and as he took a deep shaky breath, he reopened them to find his eyes drier. Smiling at his girlfriend, he reached up to cover her hand on his cheek, before enclosing it in his own hand once more.

"If I've learnt anything over the past month, Astrid, it's that I can't, no, don't want to imagine my life without you," Hiccup continued with a wide smile. "I want you by my side as I learn the ropes of this leadership thing; I want you by my side with everything we do, and most importantly, I want to spend the rest of my life with you; my Sanne Elsker..." Hiccup was suddenly interrupted by a loud gasp. As he looked up, he saw Astrid's hand suddenly fly up to her mouth as she choked back a sob, the tears in her eyes now flowing down her face unchecked. Hiccup gave out a small chuckle, having expected this reaction. In the 5 years they'd been together, he'd never once addressed her as his 'Sanne Elsker', with it being a very special expression that hardly anybody used on Berk, let alone other Viking villages. Giving her a loving smile, Hiccup suddenly went down on one knee, resulting in another sob from the young woman, as he looked up at her with the biggest smile he could make.

"Astrid Ansfrida Hofferson, I want to spend every day of the rest of my life with you. Will you marry me?" Hiccup asked her.

Astrid suddenly gasped louder as she heard the question asked officially. Tears streaming down her cheeks, she could barely make out the blurred outline of Hiccup still kneeling on the ground. As a million emotions began to run through her mind, only one word made sense to her as she went to answer.

"Yes!" she screamed. "Yes, yes, yes. A hundred times, yes!"

Tears filling his own eyes, Hiccup quickly got up off the ground, just in time for Astrid to suddenly fling her arms around his neck. Staggering back a little, Hiccup laughed as he brought a hand up to her cup her face, looking at her with a loving smile. "I love you," he said, his voice wavering a little.

"I love you too," she choked out, as she suddenly met her lips with Hiccup's. Startled, he gave out a little "humph" in surprise, before suddenly closing his eyes and eagerly responding. Wrapping his arms tightly around her waist, Hiccup kissed his now fiancée back with as much passion as he could, with so much enthusiasm; he lifted her off her feet, resulting in a giggle from Astrid as her feet left the ground. Neither of them were sure how long they stood there for, but after several minutes- or what felt like several minutes to the two of them- they finally broke off the kiss, needing to breathe. Breathing heavily, Hiccup reached up to carefully brush the tears still flowing down Astrid's cheeks aside with his thumb, giving her a warm smile, causing her to blush and put her head down in embarrassment. Undeterred, Hiccup just placed a kiss on her golden locks, before leaning his forehead gently against hers, as he stroked her face lovingly, leading to a wide smile from the both of them, before Hiccup suddenly remembered the ring he'd made for Astrid. Without breaking eye contact, Hiccup quickly reached into his flight suit, and gently pulled it out into Astrid's view.

When her eyes fell upon the ring in Hiccup's hand, she gasped, and her eyes flicked from that to Hiccup's eyes in amazement. The ring was gold, with burnished edges. Inlaid around the edges of the ring were alternating rubies and emeralds that were cut so that they caught every drop of light and glowed like red and green fires. The outermost edge of the ring was flattened, and engraved into the gold was a pattern of Toothless, wound around himself in alternating loops, ending with his head near his tail. Upon closer inspection, Astrid noticed there was an engraving on the ring, and as she read it, she looked up at Hiccup with an amused smile. On the inside of the ring a message was scribed; "love at first flight" with a simple heart separating the sentence from running over itself. Taking Astrid's hand in his, Hiccup gently placed the ring onto her ring finger. It was a perfect fit.

Hiccup started as he was snapped out of his reverie by a gentle hand brushing his face, wiping away a stray tear that Hiccup hadn't even noticed he'd shed. As she gently caressed his cheek, he suddenly took her hand and brought it to his lips in a swift kiss, before leaning his forehead on hers once again.

"Hiccup, when did you have time to make this?" Astrid asked him, breaking the silence.

Hiccup chuckled. "Why do you think I've been so busy the past few weeks?" he asked. "It's not like the village is that needy," he joked.

Astrid looked at him, eyebrows raised. "You mean...you've been working on this lately?" Suddenly emitting a laugh, Astrid shook her head in amusement. "All this time, I thought you'd been too busy for me!"

"Well I was," Hiccup replied with a grin. "Just not in the way you were thinking." Looking at the ring fitted snug on Astrid's finger, he looked at her with a smile upon his lips. "As soon as I knew I wanted to finally propose, I started to make this for you. Mum had some jewels she wanted me to use, and Gobber had some gold he acquired from Trader Johan a while back, so I spent every spare moment I had in the forge." Looking at Astrid again, he suddenly chuckled. "What did you think of the inscription?" he asked

nervously.

Astrid snorted. "I never thought you could get any cornier than you are now, but you've proven me wrong," she said making Hiccup's eyes widened in concern. "That's what I get when my husband- to-be is such a dork, though," she smiled, as she met his lips in another chaste kiss.

"Are you calling your Chief a dork?" Hiccup replied jokingly.

"No," Astrid answered with a grin. "I'm calling my fianc  e a dork. You can't use your Chief status on me seeing as I'm going to be the \_wife \_of the Chief, can you?"

"No I can't, milady," Hiccup agreed. "Especially when she is in equal status with her husband"

"And don't you forget it," Astrid said cheerfully.

"Wouldn't dream of it," Hiccup said with a contented smile, as he suddenly captured her lips once more. Sighing happily, Astrid gladly closed her eyes once more as she responded to the kiss, wrapping her arms around Hiccup's neck. When she'd woken up that morning, she never would have thought, she'd be engaged by the day's end, but now that she was, the young woman didn't think she could be happier than she was now. After a few moments, Hiccup broke away from the kiss, and as Astrid opened her eyes once more, she realised the sun was setting. Knowing it would soon get dark, she sighed, knowing it was time to leave.

"Guess we have an announcement to make, don't we?" she asked nervously.

Hiccup nodded. "Guess so," he agreed. "Ergh, announcing to everyone that you're engaged is one thing, but when you're Chief-" Hiccup groaned. "This is going to be a \_long\_ night."

"Come on, almighty Chief, let's go make everyone's day" Astrid said with a grin. "Besides, as Chief, aren't you supposed to enjoy making announcements and speeches?"

"No," Hiccup scoffed. "I suck at it! Plus stop calling me that," Hiccup said, with a hint of amusement in his tone.

"Why?" Astrid asked innocently. "I think it suits you."

"You would," Hiccup said with a chuckle. "Come on, we have an announcement to make." Turning to head back to the village though, he suddenly felt Astrid's fist make contact with his arm, and yelping in pain, he turned back to face her. "Oww, why Astrid?" he whined, rubbing his arm.

"That's for making me think we were breaking up!" Astrid exclaimed. "I'd never felt so scared in all my life!"

"I find that hard to believe," Hiccup said, which earned a glare off his fianc  e. Hiccup sighed, and took her hand in his once more. "Look, I'm sorry Astrid. It never meant to come out that way. I was just nervous that's all, but I've made up for it, haven't I-?" Hiccup was suddenly cut off by Astrid's lips suddenly meeting his own once



more in a swift, yet tender kiss.

"It's alright," Astrid said gently. "I know you were nervous, I was just so worried is all." Suddenly getting an idea though, the young Viking warrior grinned, making Hiccup nervous. "Wait until everyone hears this one!" she teased.

Hiccup's eyes widened. "You're never going to let me down for this, are you?"

"Nope," Astrid confirmed with a mischievous grin.

Hiccup sighed, but smiled. "Guess I deserve that though, don't I?" he said as he placed a swift kiss upon her forehead. "Then again, it could have been worse," he said with a sudden laugh. "I was thinking of using my parent's song to propose at mum's suggestion, but let's just say my singing voice would have made you run before I finished." Hiccup rubbed the back of his neck awkwardly. "Now that would have been worse" he pointed out.

Astrid burst into fits of laughter. "You...You were going to sing for the dancing and dreaming?" she asked in amusement. She laughed again. "Now that I would have liked to have seen!" Doubling over with laughter, Hiccup grinned at her.

"Nice to see you have so much faith in me, milady," he said with a short laugh. "Maybe one day I'll thrill you with my amazing singing voice," Hiccup said, sarcasm dripping heavily with each word.

"I'll hold you to that," Astrid said, with a glint of mischief in her eyes. "Your singing can't be that bad." Looking at her fiancée, she suddenly gave him a teasing smile. "Maybe I'll have you sing at the wedding," she teased.

Hiccup eyes widened in horror. "Oh no, I'm not!" he said quickly. "My singing is worse than Fishlegs and Meatlug put together!"

Astrid snorted. "Nobody's that bad, babe," she said before she wrapped her arms around his neck, giving him a quick kiss on the tip of his nose. "Besides, I don't care what you sound like, but I would like to hear it one day."

"Sure, only if I hear you sing as well," Hiccup said with a sudden mischievous grin of his own. Realising he was trying to bluff her; she raised her eyebrows at him, before calling his bluff in an instant.

"Sure," she said simply. Hiccup suddenly opened his mouth to retort, before realising he'd fallen into his own trap. Swallowing nervously, he looked at his fiancée with a nervous smile.

"I...I just fell for that didn't I?" he asked nervously.

"Yep," she grinned. "No turning back now." With a groan, Hiccup suddenly pulled Astrid close to him by the waist. "You're a devious little thing aren't you?" he said with a grin at her.

Astrid wrapped her arms around Hiccup's neck once more, with a soft smile. "Yep, but you love me anyway." she said.

"That I do, milady," he smiled, before giving her a quick kiss on the lips. "Wedding it is then" he beamed. "I'll make sure to surprise you"

"I look forward to it," she smiled, before she turned her attention to the darkening horizon behind her. Knowing where her thoughts were at, Hiccup quickly took her hand in his.

"Come on, we have an engagement to announce," he said cheerfully. As he went to leave though, he noticed Astrid was still looking back towards the cliff with a thoughtful expression. "Um, Astrid, are you alright?" he asked.

"What?" Turning to look at Hiccup's bewildered look, Astrid suddenly laughed. "No, I'm ok, I was just thinking" Nodding her head towards the spot they had been, Astrid gave Hiccup an excited smile. "Wouldn't this be a great place to build a house...?"

\* \* \*

><p>Siri's eyes widened in realisation as her parents finished their story. "So, that's why you built the house here!" she exclaimed with an understanding smile. "Because it was where daddy proposed!"<p>

Astrid and Hiccup laughed. "That's right, Seer," Astrid confirmed. "Well, it was part of the reason anyway" she added.

Siri frowned. "What was the other reason?"

"Well..." Hiccup said gently. "I was thinking of staying in my old house with your grandmother. She'd only been back on Berk for a month by then, and I didn't really want to leave her so soon-"

"Neither did I, to be honest," Astrid interrupted. "So we both decided to live with her after the wedding." She turned to Hiccup with a grin. "Of course, your mother soon squashed that plan"

Siri giggled. "What did she do?" she asked.

"She said we were being stupid," Hiccup said simply with a large smile. "As soon as we told her we were going to stay with her, she told us to build her own house and start afresh, like we planned." He looked at his daughter. "So, I started on the plans of this place the next day. I would have started on them that night after mum told me too, but we had a \_long\_ night of celebrations"

Siri burst into fits of giggles. "Did mummy tell everyone how daddy messed up the proposal?"

"Oh come on!" Hiccup protested with a laugh. "I didn't mess up that badly! I was nervous that's all"

"I know you were, daddy," Siri said, before she giggled. "But it was still funny!"

"Nice to know my daughter has so much faith in me," Hiccup said dryly, before he gave a grin at her. "But to answer your question, yes, she did tell everyone"

"It was the talk of the night more than the engagement itself," Astrid laughed.

"Tell me about it," Hiccup mumbled.

"It's ok, daddy, I think it turned out to be very sweet in the end," Siri said cheerfully. "Even if you did almost mess it up," she added with another giggle.

"Oh, come on!"

Astrid couldn't help but laugh at how frustrated Hiccup was getting, and she wrapped an arm around his shoulders, giving him a swift kiss on the cheek. "We're just kidding, sweetie," she said with a grin. "It did turn out for the best in the end, no matter what happened before." Astrid wrapped her finger into his hair, twirling it around with her finger. "Besides, no matter how bad your proposal went, at least the wedding went off without a hitch"

Hiccup smiled. "Not anything major anyway. Even my singing didn't scare anyone off"

Siri's eyes widened. "Wait" she said. "Daddy really did sing?!"

\* \* \*

><p><em>So, there you go, that's how Hiccup proposed! He almost messed it up, but at least it turned out sweet in the end :) I really was going to have him sing for dancing and dreaming, but thought its been done way too many times already now, so I decided to go with this instead. I'm not sure I can even imagine Hiccup singing to her now after all anyway. If everyone remembers from chapter 2, Astrid's locket as well, you'll remember that 'Sanne Elsker' means true love in Norwegian, and is a very rearely used expression on Berk in my canon, even among couples like Hiccup and Astrid, so that's why it's so special to them :) <em>

\_Ok, so the next chapter will be Hiccup and Astrid's wedding! I've been doing a lot of research into Viking weddings and information, and I'll just say, this is going to be a lot of work. It may not be up until next week. I'm going to have a mix of Viking and modern traditions, mainly because a Viking wedding is a little strange lol. One thing I do need to ask you all though is who do you want to see marry Hiccup and Astrid? The chief usually does it, but as you can see, Hiccup can't marry himself! Just say in the reviews or PM me who you think is best so I can start as soon as possible. Also where do you want the flashback to start? Just before the ceremony begins, or at Hiccup and Astrid's houses showing their nerves before the wedding? Somewhere else? Just tell me what you'd prefer! \_

\_Alright, \_\_\*\*DON'T FORGET TO REVIEW!\*\*\_\_ I got so many reviews last chapter and I was so happy! :) Just remember once again though, NO FLAMES, but KIND constructive criticism is accepted. To JesusFreak who worried about reviewing due to your pen name and nobody answering your questions, feel free to review anytime, I'm not bothered by anyone's pen names, and I will always answer questions if I'm able, never worry about that :D I'm a very friendly person, I promise.

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\_Thanks for reading! :D\_

## 21. Chapter 21: A Viking Wedding

\_Alright guys, this is the chapter you've been waiting for, the wedding! And it is ONLY the wedding. Due to the already great length of this chapter, I have now decided to put the reception as a separate chapter. Then it will be a funny little story as to what occurred on the 3rd day of their wedding celebrations (yes it was traditional for Chiefs to have a 3 day wedding celebration, anything less was regarded as bad luck) in the chapter after that. Because the reception is now a separate chapter, I don't think I will have time for my final flashback chapter when Astrid discovers she's pregnant with Siri before my internship begins in a week and a half :/ I will try, but no promises, I'm sorry! It will have to wait until after internship in that case. \_

\_Most of the wedding traditions here are real by the way. There are some things I've changed and edited, but most of this stuff really did occur in a Viking wedding. I will explain it after the chapter. Now this chapter was an absolute nightmare to write and I am fully aware it is not my best work :/ But word of advice to anyone planning a Hicstrid wedding? Think long and hard about it, because it is A LOT of work. No matter how much I enjoyed myself with this chapter, I will NEVER do it again lol! \_

\_Based from the reviews, Valka won out to be the one to marry Hiccup and Astrid :) Gobber was a very close second though! Also the flashback itself will start at their houses. Thanks for everyone's ideas and input! Including my boyfriend, Alex, who once again, stepped in to help with the start of the flashback when I was having major writers block as well as some descriptions you read here.

\_

\_Anyway, I hope you don't mind it at least. Enjoy! :)\_

\* \* \*

<p><span>Chapter 21 â€" A Viking Wedding<span>

\* \* \*

><p><em>Siri's eyes widened. "Wait," she said. "Daddy really did sing?!"<em>

Hiccup and Astrid laughed. "Well, it wasn't just him singing," Astrid explained with a smile. "It was more like he joined in. Your grandmother and Gobber decided to start singing for the dancing and dreaming at the reception, and before we knew it, we were all singing and dancing." She looked at her husband with a grin "And \_somebody\_ was not as bad as he said he was."

Hiccup chuckled. "Yeah, well, it turned out I \_could\_ sing after all," he said with a smile. "Mum kept telling me I could, so I should have listened."

"You should have," Astrid agreed. "If you trusted her enough to marry us, you should have listened to her about your own singing."

As Hiccup opened his mouth to reply, he was suddenly cut off by his

daughter's surprised voice. "So \_that's\_ who married you!" Siri exclaimed with a smile. "I was starting to think daddy married himself!"

Looking at their daughter's serious expression, Hiccup and Astrid suddenly roared with laughter. "Could you imagine what it would have been like if you'd had to marry yourself?!" Astrid asked her husband as she tried to picture the scene. "That would have been the weirdest ceremony anybody would have been to in their lives!"

"Not to mention the longest," Hiccup added with a laugh. "Having to say the formal parts and my own vows? You know what it would have sounded like?" Hiccup puts on a strong accent. "Do I, Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the third take Astrid Ansfrida Hofferson to be my wife?" He changed back to his own voice. "Why, yes, yes, I do."

Astrid and Siri's mouths trembled as they held back a laugh, but as Hiccup finished his impression, they suddenly doubled over into fits of laughter, tears of mirth rolling down their cheeks. After a moment, Hiccup joined in, causing the laughter to only intensify. After a few moments, Siri managed to stop laughing long enough to look at her father with a questioning look in her eyes.

"But if you're the Chief, daddy, how can someone else marry you?"

"You choose someone to represent you," Astrid said before Hiccup could answer. "That gives the person the full power of what the Chief is supposed to do, with it still being legal-"

"And you have to choose someone you trust," Hiccup interjected. "Because if they stuff up, there's a chance, what they're trying to do may not be legal, and if it is...well-" he rubbed his neck awkwardly, "-gods help you."

Siri grinned. "Are you talking about Uncle Gobber naming that little girl 'Magnus'?" she asked with a giggle. "But I thought he was banned from performing ceremonies anymore?"

Hiccup laughed. "He is, thanks to your grandfather," he said thankfully. "But it didn't stop him from trying to persuade us anyway," He looked at Astrid as a smile appeared on his face. "It wouldn't have worked anyway. As soon as I knew I had to get someone to marry us, I asked mum." Hiccup eyebrows furrowed "I think she was surprised, to be honest," he said.

"She didn't think she deserved it, that's why," Astrid said gently. "But she was the only person we wanted to perform the ceremony, and she had seen them performed before. It took some persuading, but she did it".

Siri smiled again. "What was the wedding like? Did it go how you wanted?" Siri asked. Looking up at the wedding portrait, her parent's faces had wide, jubilant smiles painted across them, almost telling the whole story.

Astrid smiled contentedly. "It went exactly how we wanted it to," she said, looking at Hiccup with a loving smile, who placed his arm around her shoulders, before pressing his lips into her hair. "Minus

a few nerves beforehand," she then added with a teasing look at her husband, who responded with a sheepish grin.

Siri giggled. "Can you tell me about it?" she asked eagerly.

"Tell, tell!" Leif echoed with a grin, still upon his father's lap.

"Didn't think you were even listening, buddy," Hiccup grinned at his son, who had been silent through most of the story so far.

"He isn't, he's just saying it because I am," Siri noted with a giggle. "So, can you tell me?" she asked again, her eyes hopeful.

Astrid looked at Hiccup with a tender smile, before looking back at her daughter. "Where do you want us to start?" she asked her. "As we were getting ready, or just before the wedding began?"

Siri's face furrowed in thought, with an almost mocking look of concentration in her eyes. "When you were getting ready!" she exclaimed excitedly.

Hiccup grinned. "Nerves and all?"

Siri giggled. "Nerves and all, daddy."

Hiccup gave her a warm smile. "Alright then, get comfortable. This is going to be a long story..."

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup's pacing echoed through the old house. He was worrying. Fishlegs followed closely behind, trying to pin his fur cloak around his shoulders and failing desperately in spite of his repeated attempts.<p>

"Stay still, Hiccup, or I'll have Meatlug sit on you!" Fishlegs growled in frustration as Hiccup made another sharp turn around the rotund Viking right as he lunged in an attempt to place the cloak on his friend.

"I can't, Fishlegs. It feels like there's a Terrible Terror chasing a fish through my guts," Hiccup said as he dodged a tackle from Snotlout, sending him barrelling into an open doorway. Poking his head back through the door, he questioned his pacing Chief and friend.

"What's got you all knotted up? I've never seen you like this. You're worse than what you were before you caught Toothless!"

"It's justâ€¦ I know Astrid loves me. Heck, she said yes after all, even after I almost stuffed it up. But I don't know if I can be a good husband. I'm still learning how to run the village â€" Thor knows how much I'll have to learn being a husbandâ€¦" Hiccup trailed off.

"Knowing Astrid, I'm sure you'll learn as fast as possible," snickered Tuffnut from a seat by the window overlooking the village.

"Thanks for the vote of confidence, Tuff," Hiccup uttered, sarcasm dripping like winter honey from his words. Tuffnut shrugged.

Toothless had been watching his friend pace up and down across the floor from his downstairs rock bed. He wasn't quite sure what was going on with Hiccup. His friend had been looking forward to his wedding day for weeks, but here he was pacing back and forth in agitation. Or was it fear? The Night Fury wasn't sure. Leaving the warmth of the rock slab, the dragon strode past his rider's friends—even the new one that had turned up only a few months ago. He wasn't sure of this one yet. Standing in front of his friend as he paced, he smiled gummily at his friend as he walked past.

"Oh, hey, Toothless, you're up, bud?" Hiccup said, calming if but for a moment and coming to a stop in front of the dragon. Seizing upon this lull, Fishlegs took his chance and draped the cloak around Hiccup's neck. Slightly choked by the sudden motion, Hiccup pulled the cloak to a comfortable spot as the dragon in front of him laughed, in his grumbling, stilted manner. "Oh, so you were in on this, were you?" Hiccup said with a grin. Everyone in the room could tell his spirit was beginning to lift.

"I still can't get used to it when he does that," Eret said, shaking his head.

"What, laughing?" Tuffnut interjected before Hiccup could ask.

"I've never known a dragon to do that," Eret said in wonder "But then again, nothing should surprise me anymore."

"I told you dragons were unique" Hiccup said with a smile, as he rubbed the dragons head. Looking back out the window, he saw the sun was beginning to sink behind the horizon, indicating his wedding wasn't far off starting. Eyes widening in panic once more, the young man began to pace again, alarming his companions. What was making their Chief so nervous, on his wedding day on all days?

"What's wrong, lad?" Gobber asked plainly. The veteran Viking was not one to dance around a problem, not even with Hiccup now being Chief, or on the subject of feelings. Looking up at his former mentor, Hiccup looked as though he didn't know what to say, before he suddenly threw his hands up in the air, exasperated.

"It's just...argh!" The young chief pulled his hair and paced the room. "I don't know if I'll make a good husband! I barely know how to be Chief!" Looking up at his friend in alarm, Toothless bumped his head against his chest, trying his best to calm him down, but it was like he didn't even notice him Hiccup continued to pace. "It's like how it was before!" Hiccup exclaimed in a panic. "I don't know who I am or what's expected of me!"

Gobber exchanged a quick glance with the rest of the group, who all had identical expressions of alarm upon their faces. Was Hiccup having second thoughts so close to the ceremony? Trying to calm the young man down, Gobber carefully walked over to the panicked Viking, before gently placing a hand on his shoulder. Hiccup started, and wheeled around, but upon realising it was just Gobber, he calmed down.

"Lad, are...are you having second thoughts?" Gobber asked cautiously, causing Hiccup's eyes to widen in alarm.

"No!" Hiccup said quickly. "No, of course I'm not!" Looking around to his friend's anxious expressions, Hiccup shook his head wildly. "That's the last thing on my mind" Hiccup assured them. "I love Astrid. I would never have proposed to her if I wasn't ready, which I \_am.\_" Glancing down at Toothless's worried expression; Hiccup sighed as he gently stroked the dragon's head. "It's just...I'm worried that I'm not going to be the husband she deserves. I just don't want to stuff this up for her, that's all."

"Lad, if that's all you're worrying about, you'll be just fine," Gobber said in a reassuring tone. "You're not the first groom to worry about this, and you certainly won't be the last," he chuckled softly. "Just be yourself, and that will all come to you eventually. Heck, even your father, gods rest his soul, was petrified on his wedding day. It's natural."

At the mention of his father, Hiccup's shoulders suddenly slumped a little. No matter how happy or cheerful he felt at that time, there was still the fact that his father wasn't there to witness this happy occasion. An occasion his father had wanted to see for so long, yet now wasn't able to witness. Tears pricking at the corner of his eyes, Hiccup cast his eyes down to look at the floor, face reddening in embarrassment. "I wish he was here," he said quietly.

"We all wish he was here, lad," Gobber said softly, causing Hiccup suddenly look up. "And I know he would have been so proud of you if he were here. But he wouldn't have wanted you to feel sad for him on your wedding day, that's for sure." Patting the young man's shoulder, Hiccup finally managed a small smile at his former mentor. "Today is a happy day, lad. Don't go worrying about things you can't control." The blacksmith suddenly gave the young Chief a stern look. "That goes double for what type of husband you'll be. It'll come to you eventually."

Hiccup finally broke into a grin. "Did it come to him, eventually?" he asked with a grin.

"Aye, it did," Gobber said with a laugh. "The poor bugger was so nervous before he married your mother, he almost fainted." Hiccup laughed. The image of his father fainting before wedding his mother made him smile. "Point is lad, don't worry so much. Takes the fun out of the day," he grinned.

Hiccup laughed. "Thanks Gobber," he said gratefully, before he finally gave a genuine smile at the rest of the group. Stretching out his arms and showing off his full outfit, the young man grinned. "So, how do I look?" he asked cheerfully, his nerves no longer showing.

Snotlout snorted. "You want an honest answer?" he said with a teasing grin.

Hiccup frowned and looked down at his outfit. "Why, I don't look that bad, do I?" he asked nervously, as he went over to a mirror that had been placed downstairs. Standing in front of it, he looked at himself from all angles, scrutinising every bit of his outfit. He knew what



Snotlout was getting at. He looked like a skinny version of his father.

Hiccup was wearing a long-sleeved, pale sky blue tunic; the chieftain's belt, which had been taken in substantially from its last wearer, was sitting around his waist, both pinning in his shirt and holding his pale brown trouser pants up. He was wearing his best pair of boots, or should he say boot, a dark one made of leather that he had bartered from Trader Johan two months ago. It was still slightly uncomfortable on his one good foot. Around his neck was the cape that Fishlegs had managed to pin on him " snow white fur, with flecks of grey and black scattered over it. It had been pinned to his shoulder guards, which also draped chains of highly polished scale armour across his chest in the shape of a V; it caught the light of the sun like quicksilver, and had practically no blemishes of any kind.

"Ergh," Hiccup groaned. "I look like a skinnier version of dad. Astrid's going to be beautiful like always, and I look like an idiot."

"You don't look like an idiot," Fishlegs assured him. "Just...different, is all."

"Same thing in my opinion," Hiccup said dryly. "I hope Astrid is having better luck than me," he said hopefully.

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><p>The preparations at the Hofferson household were a world away from what was happening in the Chief's home. As Astrid was being helped into her wedding gown, nothing could wipe the smile off her face. Whereas Hiccup was a ball of nerves, Astrid was excited and blissfully happy as the women in the household prepared the young woman for the biggest day of her life. Looking down at her dress, Astrid couldn't help but smile wider as she realised the day was finally here. In under an hour, she would be standing in front of Hiccup in the Great Hall, ready to take her vows and become Astrid Haddock. The thought of becoming Hiccup's wife made her stomach fill with butterflies of excitement and as she watched Ruffnut come over to her, with her bridal crown of wildflowers clutched in her hand.<p>

"Wow Astrid, never thought I'd see the day you'd be excited to be getting married," Ruffnut said with a chuckle. Placing the bridal crown upon Astrid's head, she stepped back to scrutinise it, before quickly adjusting it. Satisfied, she gave a nod, before giving her friend a grin. "So, you ready?" she asked her.

"As I'll ever be," Astrid said with a wide smile, her eyes bright with happiness.

"Really?" Ruffnut said in surprise. "No nerves at all?"

"Nope," Astrid said with a shake of her head. "I've had 5 years together with Hiccup to know I'm making the right choice. I couldn't be more ready."

"I never would have thought I'd hear something so girly come from you, Astrid," Ruffnut replied with a lopsided grin.

"Neither did I," she confessed. "But I guess Hiccup's changed me". Blushing, she looked up at her mother, who was holding out the ceremonial cape for her. Taking a deep breath, she turned around, allowing her mother to pin the fur cape around her neck, attaching it to her dress. She remained in place as she felt her mother smooth out the creases in the cape, before she turned her daughter around to face her with a proud smile.

"You're ready to go, sweetheart," her mother said with a look of pride evident in her features. "You look so beautiful. I never thought I'd see you in a wedding dress so soon."

Against her will, Astrid could feel tears welling up in her eyes, as she looked at her mother with a smile. "Thanks mum," she said tearfully. "I never thought I'd even get married." She gave a laugh. "I guess Hiccup changed that."

"Hiccup's a fine lad, Astrid," Ansfrida said gently. "Not only are you marrying the Chief, but you're marrying your best friend. I couldn't have chosen a better man for you" Tears began to fill the older Hofferson's woman's eyes. "Neither could your father."

"Oh mum!" Astrid protested, as tears filled her eyes once more. "Don't make me cry yet! Save it for the wedding!"

"Sorry, dear," Ansfrida said with a laugh. "But I meant it... Hiccup is a fine lad, and I couldn't be prouder for you both". Pulling her daughter in for a tight embrace, Astrid wrapped her arms around her mother, hugging her back. "Marriage is a wonderful experience, Astrid. Enjoy it as much as you can."

"I will," Astrid choked out. As her mother released her, she gave a cough as Valka came over to her, with a wide smile of her own.

"I know I haven't known you for very long, Astrid," she started. "Heck, I haven't even known my son for very long" she sighed. Frowning, Astrid reached for the woman's hand, holding it tightly in hers with a smile. Valka smiled gratefully at her, before she continued. "But I've seen you with my Hiccup these last 3 months and I couldn't have chosen a better partner for him. You have my blessing today, my dear, and I couldn't be prouder to be calling you my daughter- in- law".

Astrid gave her an appreciative smile. "That means a lot to me Valka-"

"Call me Val, dear," she interjected.

Astrid smiled. "Val," she corrected. "I know how much Hiccup loves you, and to have your blessing means the world to me" She heaved a great sigh. "Stoick gave it to us as well. He was calling me his daughter-in-law even before we were engaged. I just wish he was here to see it become official today."

Valka looked saddened at the mention of her husband's name, but she kept a brave face. "He would have been proud, lass, I know. If Stoick approved, so do I. You're going to be a wonderful voice of reason and support to my son, Astrid. I know that. He's stubborn, he's going to need all the help he can get," she chuckled.

"Don't I know it," Astrid smirked. "I've been with him for 5 years to know how stubborn he can get."

Valka gave a short laugh, as did the other women in the room. "Yes, I guess you do," Valka agreed with a smile. "It's no wonder you two work so well". Astrid smiled. "You'll certainly make a strong leader alongside him."

"Val," said Ansfrida suddenly. "It's almost time" She looked out the window. "You better go and collect Hiccup. We'll see you at the Great Hall."

"Oh," Valka said urgently. Turning back to face Astrid, she wrapped her arms around her thin frame, giving her a gentle hug. "Good luck dear. I look forward to officially calling you my daughter."

"Thanks, Val," Astrid beamed as Valka quickly went out the door towards her house. Turning her attention back to the women around her, Astrid suddenly felt as if a nest of butterflies had made a home in her stomach. She took a deep breath. The feeling didn't go away, but she wasn't bothered. They would soon be gone. Straightening out her dress, she looked at everyone. "Do I look alright?" she asked nervously.

"You look beautiful, dear," her mother assured her. Her mother looked at the length of the dress. "Just try not to trip over the dress," she said. "You're not used to them."

"You don't need to tell me twice," Astrid replied as she adjusted the dress. As she was doing that, Ruffnut passed her a bouquet of wildflowers matching her bridal crown. Taking them in her hands, it suddenly felt all real. Astrid Hofferson was about to become Astrid Haddock.

"You ready, sweetie?" Ansfrida asked her.

Astrid looked in the direction of the Great Hall, then back at her mother. Taking a deep breath, she smiled and gave a nod. "I'm ready," she confirmed.

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><p>Keeping an eye on the position on the sun, Valka quickly made her way to her house to collect her son. She hadn't seen him that day and to be honest, she wasn't sure what to expect from him. Would he be nervous? Excited? Both? The Viking woman wasn't sure, but as she made her way up the stairs towards the house, she was suddenly filled with excitement at the prospect of marrying her son very soon.<p>

Opening the door to the house, she was overcome with an urge to laugh as she saw Toothless trying to lick his friend to death, but Hiccup was trying so hard to resist, knowing he would stain his outfit. Laughing, the young man tried to get away from his best friend while the other guys guffawed at the sight. Hiccup wasn't moving very fast in his formal attire, and as Valka looked closely, she had to admit, it was a different outfit, to say the least. He didn't look bad, but it certainly was different to what she was used to seeing him in. Stepping into the house, the guys didn't even notice her presence,

except for Gobber standing by the door. Seeing her come in, Gobber grinned at her.

"Afternoon, Val," he said. "Almost time?" Looking out the door at the low position of the sun, he nodded to himself. "I guess so."

"I'm here to walk Hiccup to the Great Hall," she confirmed. As she watched Toothless still trying to get to her son, she chortled. "I see I came at a bad time, though." She looked towards her friend. "How's he been?"

"Other than being more nervous than a dragon on Eel Island earlier, he's fine," Gobber said with a chuckle. "At the moment, he's trying not to get attacked by that dragon of his" Watching as Toothless finally succeeded, he laughed. "Oops, too late," he said.

Knowing Hiccup wouldn't be happy to have his outfit ruined, Valka thought it best to intervene. "Toothless, don't ruin his outfit. Come on now," she said gently. Looking up at his friend's mother, Toothless gave a pouting look, but stepped off his rider, who sighed in relief as he struggled to get up. Seeing his mother there, Hiccup's expression changed to that of excitement as he saw the sun beginning to set behind his mother.

"It is time, mum?"

"Aye, dear," she confirmed. "Astrid was about to get ready to leave as I left. How have you been?"

"Oh, a few nerves before, but I'm alright," he grinned. His expression changed as he thought of Astrid though. "How's Astrid?" he asked nervously.

"A lot less nervous than you apparently!" his mother exclaimed with a laugh. "If she's nervous, she hides it very well. I've never seen the lass so excited." Reaching up to stroke her son's hair back; she gave a chuckle at seeing how unruly his hair was, before looking his outfit up and down. "You look...different, dear."

"If that's a way of saying I look ridiculous, I feel it too," Hiccup said. He looked down at his outfit. "I look like a skinnier version of dad", he sighed. "I wish I could just get married in my flight suit."

"Yes, and I'm sure that would go down well, dear," Valka said, sarcasm evident in her tone. "But really, Hiccup, you look fine. We're just not used to seeing you dressed like this." She gave him a small smile, which Hiccup returned.

"Thanks mum," he said tenderly before he stepped forward, wrapping his arms around her. Valka tensed for a moment, still not used to the contact with her son, before she wrapped her arms around her son in a loving embrace. Reaching up, she stroked her son's hair back, before a wide smile appeared on her lips.

"Your father would have been so proud of you today," Valka said gently. Letting go of his mother's embrace for a moment, he saw the pride in her eyes, making him smile. "And because he's not here, I will be the one to give you and Astrid my blessing today." She reached up to cup Hiccup's cheek. "I am so proud of you, son," she

said, voice thick with emotion.

Hiccup's eyes burned with tears hearing his mother say this. "Thanks mum," he said, voice slightly choked as he wrapped his arms around her once more in a tight hug. "I love you," he said softly.

Valka went still for a moment, before breaking into a wide smile. "I love you too, son," she said tenderly, as she stroked his hair.

"Erm, Hiccup, isn't it the wedding that's supposed to be emotional?" came Snotlout's voice from behind.

Breathing a laugh, Hiccup suddenly pulled away from his mother's embrace. Looking out the door, he saw the sun was just about ready to sink below the horizon, indicating it was time to go. The ceremony was due to start at any minute.

"I guess you're right, Snotlout," Hiccup said with a grin. "It's time to get going anyway." He turned to his best friend. "You ready for Astrid to join the family, bud?" he asked cheerfully. Looking up at his rider, the Night Fury gave him a gummy smile, before nuzzling up to the young man in agreement. Stroking the dragon's head, Hiccup then looked up at Fishlegs. "Fishlegs, you got the rings?" he asked quickly.

"Got them, Hiccup," Fishlegs confirmed, as he held them up for Hiccup to see.

"Alright then, it's time to go," Hiccup said nervously. "If I'm late, Astrid will kill me."

"I wouldn't doubt it either," Snotlout mumbled to Gobber, who gave a chuckle of amusement, as they stepped out the door into the fading light of the afternoon. Making their way to the Great Hall, Hiccup nervously ascended the steps, before entering the open doors of the hall behind his mother. The entirety of the village was already assembled inside, and as he entered, their voices grew louder and echoed around the hall, and only grew louder as he made his way through the hall. When he reached the raised platform at the end of the hall, Valka was already there, talking to Gothi who was there to make sure everything went to plan. Toothless, as first best man, -or best dragon in this case-, took his place next to his rider on one side. Fishlegs, being Hiccup's second best man, took his place on the other. The rest of the group arrived closely after, and took their places in the front row of the throng of Vikings.

Nervously looking up at the doorway of the hall, Hiccup watched as he waited for the bridal party. As he waited nervously, he suddenly felt Toothless nudged him gently. Looking down at the Night Fury, he gave him a warm smile as he stroked the dragons head appreciatively. Glancing up once more, he saw the sun had almost sunk completely over the horizon, yet there was still no sign of Astrid. Where was she?

Just as Hiccup was beginning to panic, he suddenly heard the blast of a horn announcing the arrival of the bridal party. Looking up in anticipation, his heart skipped a beat as he saw the bridal party file into the hall one by one, down the hall, before taking their places at the front of the group of Vikings. Looking back towards the

doorway once more, Hiccup then saw Stormfly enter the Great Hall, followed by Ruffnut who was looking very uncomfortable in a tight fitting dress. As he looked behind Ruffnut though, Hiccup's breathing caught in his throat as he set eyes on Astrid for the first time, arm in arm with her father, Amund.

She was beautiful.

She was wearing a pale white dress, with a short train following behind her. The square collar of the dress framed her round face, bordered by her long, flowing golden hair, in a rare appearance outside of her braid. Falling from her shoulders, down her back, was a pure white fur cape, to match Hiccup's. Where the dress met the ground, the borderline of the collar, and at her elbows, were fine gold filigree worked into the cloth, making patterns of ferns and flowers. She wore a gilded gold chain across her hips, a small shield emblem hanging roughly halfway down her torso. Dangling from her neck was a string of snow white pearls her mother had given her moments before, and atop her brow sat the crown of wildflowers. A small, final detail that most might miss was a small wooden bracelet worn on her left wrist, a plain carving of Stormfly being the only adornment.

As Hiccup was staring at awe at his beautiful fiancée, she suddenly looked up at him, giving him a wide smile. Feeling like his heart was in his throat, Hiccup just continued to stare at her, engulfed by how beautiful she looked. Feeling like the luckiest man in the world, Hiccup smiled back at her, his heart beating rapidly as she slowly came towards him. When she and her father reached the steps, Amund turned to face his daughter with a proud smile on his lips, before he turned to Hiccup, giving a slight nod to him.

"I give you my blessing, Hiccup," he said, as he placed his daughter's hand on Hiccup's. Looking up at his soon to be father-in-law, Hiccup smiled gratefully at him.

"I promise I'll take care of her, Amund."

Giving him a nod, Amund turned to Astrid, giving her a proud smile, which she returned before he went join his wife in the front row of the assembled Vikings. As he did, Hiccup turned his attention back to Astrid who was gazing back at him with a loving smile. Taking her hand in his, Hiccup's breath caught in his throat as he looked gently led her up the few stairs leading up to the platform, before standing in position in front of his mother.

Hiccup locked his eyes with Astrid's, a bright smile appearing on his face. "You look...beautiful," Hiccup gushed, resulting in a blush arising on the young woman's cheeks.

Turning her attention to Gothi beside her, Valka silently asked if this was her cue. Giving her a nod, Valka then stepped forward, immediately silencing the throng of Vikings. Reluctantly, Hiccup and Astrid tore their eyes away from one another's in order to give her their full attention.

"In sight of the gods, and Vikings present, we are gathered here today to witness the union of these two faithful souls, Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third and Astrid Ansfrida Hofferson," Valka began. "In the sight and blessing of the gods, we ask you to today to

bless these two young Vikings as they begin their new lives in a lifetime bond that will see them sharing their lives as one". Taking a step back, Valka allowed Gothi to then step forward instead. Holding a bundle of fir needles, the elderly women placed them into a gold bowl filled with water, before gently sprinkling the liquid onto the couple. As she did, Valka stepped forward once more.

"May Frigg, the goddess of marriage bless you both upon your union today, and grant you a lifetime of happiness, strength and unity," Valka said softly. Lowering their heads in respect, Hiccup and Astrid both closed their eyes, as did Valka and the rest of the Vikings present. "May you give this couple the lifetime of happiness they deserve and show your approval towards this match. Bless them."

"Bless them," the throng of Vikings chorused.

"Bless you," Hiccup and Astrid said in unison towards each other, before once more opening their eyes.

"Bless them," Valka said quietly before she too opened her eyes, before she looked at Fishlegs and Ruffnut with a nod. Understanding what she was asking, the two of them received a sword each from Gobber and Amund respectively, before stepping forward next to Hiccup and Astrid.

"As Hiccup and Astrid come before you all today to solidify their love for one another, they join together in a bond that not only ties two people together, but also two families. Today, with the marriage of their children, the families of Haddock and Hofferson will join together. We symbolise this bond, and our promise to the gods, by exchanging the swords of our families, so that our blood is their blood and souls twinned," said Valka as she stepped back once more.

Stepping next to Hiccup, Fishlegs carefully passed the Haddock ancestral sword to Hiccup, who shakily took it in his hands before holding it out to Astrid. "As was wielded by my ancestors, now in Valhalla, and as I wield now, I now entrust this sword to you, my bride, in order to pass it to our future children" Hiccup recited nervously.

Hands shaking, Astrid took the sword out of Hiccup's hands. "I, Astrid Hofferson, take your family's sword as a symbol of binding of blood and soul, and as a symbol of our promise to the gods," she said, her voice quavering slightly. A small smile played upon her lips, though, as she handed it to Ruffnut for safe keeping. In exchange, Ruffnut then handed the Hofferson ancestral sword to Astrid, who took it carefully, trying not to drop it in her shaking hands. Taking a deep breath, Astrid nervously held out the sword to Hiccup. "As was wielded by my ancestors, now in Valhalla, and as I wield now, I now entrust this sword to you, my groom, as a token of my love for you, and to solidify our union."

Taking the sword out of Astrid's hands, Hiccup gave her a nervous smile. "I, Hiccup Haddock, take your family's sword as a symbol of binding of blood and soul, and as a symbol of our promise to the gods," he said softly. Passing the sword to Fishlegs, Hiccup took Astrid's hands in his once again, as Valka stepped forward once more.

"With the exchanging of family swords, the bonds between the two families and the gods have been exchanged, and as such, we will now exchange rings as a symbol for your intertwined souls."

Digging his hand into his pocket, Fishlegs pulled out the rings, before placing them carefully on the hilts of both swords. Once he was done, he warily placed the hilt on the side in the middle of the two, the ring glittering on the hilt.

Plucking the ring off the hilt of the sword, Hiccup gently took Astrid's hand within his own. "I, Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third," he recited, "present you, Astrid Ansfrida Hofferson with this ring." Lovingly placing the ring on her ring finger, Hiccup felt his eyes burn as tears began to prick at the corner of his eyes. "In a symbol of my love and devotion to you, as I take you as my wife". Looking up Astrid at last, he gave a soft chuckle as her eyes too, were beginning to glisten as she looked back at him with love filling her eyes.

Once her ring was placed back on her finger, Fishlegs stepped back to allow Ruffnut to come forward and place Astrid's new sword in between them, Hiccup's ring on its hilt. Carefully picking the ring up, Astrid shakily took it in her hand as she presented it to Hiccup. "I, Astrid Ansfrida Hofferson," she said, her voice wavering she spoke "-present you, Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third with this ring". As she slipped the ring, with the same design as her own, minus the jewels onto Hiccup's finger, her vision became blurry as more tears began to fill her eyes, "In a symbol of my love and devotion to you, as I take you as my husband". Voice breaking at the last word, Astrid looked up at Hiccup only to see his eyes also filled with tears, making her smile at him happily, as she held his hands tighter in her own.

Tears of joy filling her own eyes, Valka quietly cleared her throat as she stepped forward once more. "Please place your hands on the hilt of the swords," she instructed gently. Without taking their eyes off each other's gaze, Hiccup and Astrid reached for each other's hands, holding them tight in their own as they felt the bumped material of the hilts underneath their fingertips. "With the exchanging of swords and rings, Hiccup and Astrid will now speak their vows. Vows which will show their love and devotion to each other as witnessed by you all present and by the Gods themselves," Valka said as she turned her attention to her son who was still gazing endearingly at his bride.

"Hiccup, dragon trainer and Chief of Berk," She hesitated. ",my son". Tearing his eyes from Astrid for a moment, Hiccup finally saw the tears quickly filling his mother's eyes, and as he looked at her worriedly, she quickly gave him a reassured smile. "Speak your vows," she said softly.

Swallowing nervously, Hiccup felt the butterflies re-emerge in his stomach as he looked back towards Astrid's beaming face. This was the moment he feared. The moment he was so afraid of messing up. As he opened his mouth to try and speak, he suddenly felt a gentle nudge against his side, and as he looked down, he noticed his best friend staring up at him in reassurance. Hiccup had been practicing his vows in front of the dragon for weeks, and Toothless knew he could do this. Giving his rider a gummy grin of encouragement, Hiccup's nerves



suddenly vanished as quickly as they came. As he looked back up into Astrid's eyes, he took a deep breath and the words he'd so often practiced came flowing out in a flood of words.

"Astrid," he said warmly. "I've known you since we were kids, and had a crush on you for almost as long". He suddenly stopped when he heard Astrid's gentle laugh and as he looked at her, she blushed and stopped, before mouthing 'sorry'. Chuckling, Hiccup squeezed her hand in his own, and continued. "For a long time, I never thought I'd ever have a chance with you, not while I was Hiccup the useless, and fighting dragons were our lives. But that first ride on Toothless-" Looking down at the Night Fury, Hiccup suddenly found himself grinning at him. "Changed things for both of us in ways I never thought possible. Not only did I gain acceptance, but I gained your friendship, and before long, your love". Hiccup felt tears beginning to prick at his eyes, and as he looked at Astrid, saw the same thing occurring. "These past 5 years with you since then have been amazing. You have been my biggest supporter, and I now know I can't live my life without you. When you accepted my proposal just two short months ago, I knew I had made the right decision". As Hiccup's eyes began to swim with tears, he also began to feel his voice becoming choked the more he talked. "Astrid Hofferson, I love you so much. After everything we have been through together, I know more than ever that you are best friend, my supporter, my soul mate, and my Sanne Elsker."

Suddenly overwhelmed with the emotions swirling inside him, Hiccup took a sharp intake of breath as tears begin to spill out of his eyes, onto his cheeks. Expecting the throng of Vikings to laugh at him, he was surprised when he suddenly heard several sobs emit from the front row, as well from Astrid, who took her hand away from his in one swift motion as she let out a soft sob of her own. Lifting his head up to look at her, he was stunned to find tears flowing down her cheeks unchecked, her azure eyes glistening brightly. Sniffling loudly, Hiccup took a deep breath to continue. "If there is anything I know of you, Astrid, it is that you will stand by me through thick and thin. I can't promise our lives will always be perfect, but what I can promise is that I will always love you. I promise to take care of you and support you throughout our lives. I will try to be the best husband you can ask for, and one day, the best father I can be. I will always respect, honour and cherish you, and I can't wait to spend the rest of my life with you. You are the most amazing, beautiful, strongest and most caring woman I could have ever asked for, Astrid and I love you, always have and always will."

Tears spilled once more out of Astrid's eyes as Hiccup completed his vow, making her vision blurry as she tried to smile at him. Reaching up, she tried to wipe them away, only for new ones to take their place. Giving up, she just sniffed loudly and placed her hand back into Hiccup's.

Sniffling gently, Valka now looked towards Astrid. "Astrid, daughter of Ansfrida and Amund, dragon trainer, speak your vows" she said softly.

Astrid gave a weak chuckle. "How can I top that?" she said, resulting in a laugh from the assembled Vikings and Hiccup, who gave her a grin. Returning it, she then turned to Stormfly beside her, who gave her a squawk of encouragement. Astrid wasn't the only one who had practiced her vows in front of her dragon for weeks on end. Looking

into Hiccup's adoring eyes, she took a deep breath and began to speak.

"Hiccup, when you first took me on that ride on Toothless, I was petrified. Not only did you kidnap me, but I was afraid that what you were saying was true. To this day I am so grateful that you did kidnap me, because on that day, not only did you change all our lives, but you changed mine as well". Feeling her voice beginning to constrict, she tried her best to ignore it. "On that day, I made a friend in you, a friend who I would grow to love. You think I'm your biggest supporter, yet I know of plenty of times that you've been there for me. Whenever I need you, you're there for me, even when you're too busy, you make time for me. These past five years I've spent with you has been the most amazing years of my life, and I look forward to spending the rest of my life with you as your wife. I know our lives won't always be perfect, and you will be busy often as Chief, but I promise I will always stand by you. You are my Sanne Elsker-"

Blinking furiously, Astrid struggled to hold the tears in her eyes back, but as they spilled over onto her cheeks once more, her voice began to fail her. She felt Hiccup's hand tighten around hers, and as she looked up, she saw that he was struggling to hold his tears back. "You are my Sanne Elsker-" she repeated, "- and I can't imagine living my life without you. As your wife, I promise to always love, cherish and stand by you in all matters, and I will always try to be the best wife, and one day, mother, I can be. You bring out the best of me, and you make my life interesting. Hiccup, you are the most amazing, bravest and most selfless man I could ever ask for and I...I promise that I will always love you, and care for you throughout our lives". Looking up at Hiccup once more, she suddenly grinned. "I love you, you big dork" she finished with a laugh.

As the Great Hall suddenly erupted with laughter, Hiccup looked back at Astrid with an amused expression slowly coming across his face. "Is that so, milady?" he asked with a chuckle as he pulled her towards him, leaning in for a kiss. As he did though, he suddenly felt a sharp pain erupt in his one good foot. Startled, he looked down to find Gothi's walking stick on top of his foot, with her looking at him, very unamused. Stifling a laugh, Valka looked at her son and Astrid with a grin,

"It's not time for that yet, dear," she reminded him with an amused smile.

"Oh, come on!" Hiccup protested. "Surely it can't hurt?" But he soon got his answer when the elderly woman suddenly raised her stick over his foot again, and he quickly raised his hands. "Ok, no kiss yet, I get it!" he said quickly, causing a laugh from Astrid who had never seen the older woman so annoyed.

As the laughter in the hall died down, Valka cleared her throat allowing Hiccup and Astrid to pay their full attention to her once more. "Now that we have gotten back on track," she said with a grin. "We will now drink from the goblet of union so that we may seal this union once and for all". Valka motioned to Gothi to pass her the golden goblet, and as she placed it in her hands, she turned her attention back to the couple. "This is the goblet of union," she explained. "As you both drink from its contents, a sash will be tied around your wrists which will seal your union once and for all, and

be married in the sight of the gods and your people."

Gently handing the goblet filled with honeyed mead to her son, Hiccup carefully raised it to his lips and took a small sip, never taking his eyes from Astrid's face all the while. As he finished, he then passed it to Astrid, who then took a sip herself. As she did, Valka wound the sash around both of their wrists. "With the tying of this sash, we symbolise the uniting of the families of Haddock and Hofferson, as well as these two souls, as one," said Valka, as she passed the goblet back to Gothi. "And with the exchanging of swords, rings and vows, Hiccup and Astrid have sealed their love for one another in front of you all, and the gods, and with this", she quickly unwrapped the sash entwined around the couple's wrists, "I now pronounce them to be husband and wife". As Hiccup gave her an expectant look, Valka laughed and gave her son and now daughter-in-law a wink. "\_Now,\_ you may kiss the bride."

Hiccup didn't need telling twice. Wrapping his arms around Astrid's waist, he gently pulled her towards him before meeting her lips, kissing her as firmly as he could. Astrid giggled against his lips as she wrapped her arms around his neck, winding her fingers into his hair, kissing him back with as much passion as him. As they kissed, they were only aware of each other, the sounds of the clapping, whistling and cheering in the background were lost to the newly married couple as they continued to kiss. They were even barely aware of the slight tug on their necks as Toothless and Stormfly used their teeth to pull their ceremonial capes off to symbolise the marriage becoming official. Noticing their distraction to only each other, Valka gave a slight chuckle and looked at Fishlegs, Ruffnut, Toothless and Stormfly with a slight grin.

"I think we'll have to start celebrating without them," she joked.

Hearing his mother, Hiccup suddenly gave a laugh against Astrid's lips before pulling half heartedly pulling away from her, resting his forehead against hers. Reaching up to cup her cheek, Hiccup gave her a loving smile as he stroked her cheek. "I love you," he said sweetly.

"I love you too," Astrid replied emotionally. Breathing a laugh, Hiccup quickly pressed his lips against her temple, before brushing his thumb over her cheek to wipe a tear that had just escaped from her eye.

"Welcome to the family, Astrid Haddock," Hiccup said with a joyful smile at her, which she returned as she and Hiccup turned to face everyone. As they did, the hall erupted with cheers again, making them smile wider than ever had before. Toothless and Stormfly happily bounced around their riders, as Valka suddenly stepped forward, a proud smile upon her lips.

"People of Berk, I introduce to you, Hiccup and Astrid Haddock, Chief and Cheiftness of Berk!"

\* \* \*

><p><em>So there you have it, Hiccup and Astrid's wedding. Once again, I apologise it wasn't the best, despite all the effort I put into it, it just didn't go the way I planned it : I hope it was ok

though! Especially the vows which were really hard. I'm not very eloquent in writing this stuff.\_

\_Ok, so, in this wedding, all the parts were true to Viking culture. The blessing was changed to water being sprinkled on them, because in reality the blood of an animal sacrifice was used and I found that totally disgusting, so I changed it. Family swords being exchanged wasn't touched. The way they exchanged rings was made more romantic, given that in real Viking custom, they placed their ring on their own fingers themselves, not very intimate. Some of the things they said were a mix of being made up, ideas given to me by previous fanfictions and research. The tying of the sash was only used in certain cultures, but I liked the idea. The removing of the capes was fiction, but the dragons needed a bigger role :) And yes, Chieftainess is a real word, although it is rarely seen. Astrid's wedding dress was actually of Celtic design, but the cultures are similar so it doesn't matter. Anyway, it was a lot of research and work, and I hope it showed :) If anyone wants to see the inspiration I used for her dress, the links are on my profile page.\_

\_Next chapter is the reception, which should be up by the end of the week. It will be mostly made up, but with a few real traditions thrown in. If anyone would like to see something in the reception, just tell me! If I can fit it in, I will. Plus to greenshadel5 who asked me to write Hiccup and Astrid their own song, I am so sorry, but as much as I'd love to do that, I have no musical talent whatsoever and would never pull it off :/ I hope you understand. Besides they just join in singing anyway, and are not necessarily singing to just each other, so it should be alright. And no, MHJohn64th, I will not make them sing bad! :p \_

\_DON'T FORGET TO REVIEW! I beat my record AGAIN last chapter with 23 reviews, and I want to thank you all so much for that! I was a little worried how that proposal turned out, but you all made me feel better about it. I made it to 208 reviews, and now I think I'll beat 250 before internship. Wow! Remember once again, NO FLAMES, but KIND constructive criticism is accepted.\_

\_Thanks for reading! :D\_

## 22. Chapter 22: Celebration

\_ Be warned guys, this chapter is 9000 words long and is longer than the actual wedding chapter! The reception only took 4 days to write despite my busy schedule, and I have to admit, it was fun to write. Hope you all like it! (\*\*Before says anything, yes I do have confidence issues in my own writing, and I am fully aware I put myself down as people have noticed in reviews\*\*)\_

\_Most of the traditions and wording in these traditions in this chapter are real. It might surprise you all to know that a Viking reception involved very heavily on fertility and the role of husband and wife, which you'll see here, but I also put my own spin on it on the matter of whether they like this stuff themselves! :p The rest of it was my own spin though, and you'll be happy to see 'For the dancing and dreaming' makes an appearance! That was a lot of fun to write I assure you.\_

\_Ok I have to say this too, but guys, the next chapter (which you'll

know more about by the end of this chapter) will be my LAST chapter before I start internship. As of now, I am really busy preparing lessons and classes for the first week and I simply don't have time to be writing all day everyday to finish the chapters I originally planned. I'm so sorry! But I'll explain more at the end.\_

\_Enjoy the chapter!\_

\_Just to be on the safe side as well. Disclaimer: I do not own the lyrics for 'the dancing and the dreaming' as it all belongs to the amazing John Powell and DreamWorks Animation. I've never placed a song in a fanfic before!\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 22: Celebration<span>

\* \* \*

><p>"<em>People of Berk, I introduce to you, Hiccup and Astrid Haddock, Chief and Cheiftainess of Berk!"<em>

The hall erupted into cheers once more, as Hiccup and Astrid both grinned at their people with the widest grins that anyone had ever seen upon their faces. They looked happier than the village had ever seen them. While the cheers went on, Astrid turned to face her new husband with the same grin still on her face.

"Nice outfit by the way," she said with a chuckle.  
"Very...different."

"Seriously, why is everyone saying that?!" Hiccup exclaimed in frustration. "I don't look that bad do I?"

Astrid giggled as she wrapped her arms around his waist. "No, you don't look bad, babe. I've just never seen you dressed so...formal."

"Well, it \_is \_a wedding milady," Hiccup said with a smile. "Unless you wanted me in my flight suit?" Hiccup looked down at his outfit. "Because believe me that would have suited me just fine."

"If I have to wear a dress, you have to wear that," Astrid said simply.

Hiccup smiled as he touched her cheek once more. "I meant it earlier by the way," he said softly, as he caressed her cheek. "You look so beautiful. I never thought it was even possible for you to look more beautiful," he said sincerely.

Astrid blushed. Tears filling her eyes once more, she leant in for another kiss. Happily obliging, Hiccup pulled her close to him once more, ignoring the stares from the Vikings around him. For a few moments anyway.

"Hey, save that for the wedding night will you!" Snotlout sniggered from nearby.

Breaking away from Astrid, Hiccup grinned at his friend. "Yeah sure, you want us to go now?" he teased.

Blushing red, Snotlout opened his mouth to retort, but found himself unable to speak. Looking at the two of them, he suddenly scampered, leaving the two of them in fits of laughter.

"I didn't think so," Hiccup said with a laugh.

"It is time for the celebrations!" Valka suddenly announced. Suddenly turning his attention back to his mother, he saw she was holding up her arms trying to get the villager's attentions. With such a quiet voice though, her voice wasn't carrying any further than the first few rows, Hiccup quickly looked at Toothless.

"Toothless, help mum out?"

Turning to face the throng of Vikings, Toothless suddenly let out an almighty roar immediately silencing the chatter. As soon as it was all quiet, Valka looked at the dragon gratefully before again addressing the audience.

"It is time for the celebrations to begin," she repeated. "As Hiccup and Astrid go to their table, could you please move the other tables back to their positions before joining the bride and groom at the toasting."

As soon as she was finished speaking, there was a bustle of activity within the hall as tables were returned to their original positions. As they did so, Hiccup reached out his hand to Astrid, with a warm smile. "Shall we, milady?" he asked gently.

"We shall," she grinned as she took his offered hand, before walking over to the high table where two large chairs had been placed. Standing in front of them, they waited until the others had finished so that the celebrations could officially begin.

As the Vikings began to converge on the high table, Hiccup turned his head towards Astrid who gave him a nod. Taking her hand in his, Hiccup slowly led her to her chair, making sure she didn't trip up the few steps in their way. If Astrid were to trip at any time during the night, it would mean bad fortune upon their marriage. Swallowing nervously, Hiccup kept an eye on Astrid as she glided up the few steps, and as she reached the top, let out a sigh of relief. Turning to face the throng of Vikings, Hiccup held up Astrid's hand with a wide smile.

"People of Berk, my beautiful wife, Astrid Ansfrida \_Haddock,\_"  
Hiccup said, greatly emphasising her new last name. "May we have a lifetime of happiness and good fortune together as we begin our married lives." He turned to her with a loving smile. "Long live the Cheiftainess!" Hiccup exclaimed loudly, resulting in a blush to arise on Astrid's cheeks as she smiled in embarrassment.

"Long live the Cheiftainess!" the other Vikings repeated merrily.  
"Long live the Chief!"

"Long live us both," Hiccup said quietly as he took Astrid in his arms once more and kissed her on the lips in a short gentle kiss. As he did so, the Great Hall erupted in cheers once again. Pulling away from Astrid, who was blushing redder than a dragon's flame, Hiccup then took her hand once more as she sat down in the chair behind her.

Sitting beside her, Hiccup took her hand still enclosed in his and brought it to his lips in a tender kiss, resulting in a very un-Astrid like giggle. As he lowered her hand down, Hiccup smiled warmly at her. As she about to smile back, she saw Valka come up to their table with an awkward look on her face. Knowing what was coming up, Astrid hid her face in her hand and upon noticing her reaction, Hiccup followed her lead. This part of the reception was embarrassing for any new couple, no matter who they were. Why Vikings had these traditions in the first place, Hiccup would never understand.

Looking at her son and new daughter-in-law in sympathy, Valka turned back to the expectant crowd of Vikings. "It is time for the drinking of the bridal ale," Valka said sheepishly as she turned to look at the bride, she gave her an apologetic look. "For her first duty as a wife, Astrid will now serve the ceremonial honeyed mead to her new husband." Valka sighed. "But as you know, this is only tradition and not how things are on Berk," Valka added as she heard a few huffs from the Viking women in the audience, as well as men.

Blushing furiously, Astrid got to her feet and took the ceremonial mead that Gothi was holding out to her. Walking over to Hiccup, who was looking as if he wanted to get up and save his new wife, she carefully poured the mead into his goblet before holding it out to him. Trying to remember the vow she had been taught to say for weeks, Astrid nervously began to recite it. "Ale I bring thee, thou oak of battle. With strength...with strength...", blushing furiously, Astrid wildly looked around as she realised she couldn't remember the words. Frantically trying to think of them, Astrid's eyes filled with tears of frustration as she tried and failed to remember the vow. Seeing her distress, Hiccup quickly took a hold of her hand and gave her a smile of encouragement, as did Valka, who looked at Astrid with a worried smile. Seeing her husband and mother-in-law's encouraging looks, Astrid took a deep breath as she slowly remembered the words. She tried again.

"Ale I bring thee, thou oak-of-battle, with strength blended and brightest honour; 'tis mized with magic and mighty songs, with goodly spells, wish-speeding runes," Astrid recited as she handed the cup to Hiccup who gave her a proud smile. Taking the cup in his hand, Hiccup suddenly blushed as well as he recited his response.

"To Thor, to Odin, and to all gods watching over us, I thank thee for your blessings and for my beautiful wife and the life I shall have with her." Hiccup then raised the cup to his lips and drank a few sips of the honeyed mead, trying not to make a face as the taste of it hit his tongue. Returning the cup to Astrid, she followed his lead, the blush in her cheeks only intensifying as she spoke again.

"To Freyja, may you bless me with my life ahead with my husband, and grant me the blessing of children within my marriage." Raising the cup to her lips, Astrid drank the mead also, not as bothered as Hiccup by the taste of it. She then returned the cup to Hiccup who drank from it once more, and this continued to the last drop was finished. As it was, the Vikings suddenly cheered once more, before bursting into whistles, applause, and foot stamping. Knowing the worst wasn't over yet though, Hiccup and Astrid were reluctant to join in with the applause.

"With the ceremonial drinking of mead completed, let us bless the bride with Thor's Hammer," Valka spoke up, her face as red as the newlyweds as she turned to face the two of them. "Hiccup," she said gently.

Eyes widening in embarrassment, Hiccup stood up from his chair as he received a hammer from Fishlegs who was looking as awkward as his friend. Looking as if he wanted to be anywhere, but there, the larger Vikings looked away uncomfortably. Approaching his bride, Hiccup looked at her with an apology in his eyes as he gently laid the hammer across her lap. Blushing furiously, he turned to the Vikings present, before reciting along with his mother; "Bring the Hammer the bride to bless: On the maiden's lap lay ye Mjolnir; In Vor's name, Frigga, then our wedlock blessed!" Quickly removing the hammer from his wife's lap, Hiccup gave it back to Fishlegs who, as was as red as he, quickly scampered away with it.

Turning again to the audience, Valka seemed to breathe a sigh of relief as she smiled widely at them. "With the blessings of the gods, and our new bride being blessed for future fertility, I now declare the marriage of Hiccup and Astrid to be proven valid and blessed, and with that, Hiccup will now present his new bride with her first gifts as his wife." She turned to Hiccup with a smile, who nodded, and received a few things from Gobber, before presenting them to Astrid, with a wide smile.

"To my new bride, I now present to you the key to our newly built house. As the head of our household, you have the only key to our house, and if I should steal it, you may kick me out." Mouth trembling, Hiccup couldn't but start to laugh as he said all this, and neither could the others. As she reached out to take the key from his hand, Astrid suddenly grinned at him.

"I would never kick you out babe," Astrid said with a grin, resulting in another round of laughter to burst forth. Handing the key to a waiting Ruffnut, she suddenly turned back to Hiccup with a warm smile. "Although I may get annoyed at you from time to time," she chuckled.

Hiccup snorted. "I feel the love, milady," he said with a laugh. Taking the other gift in his hand, he then presented it to her as well. "For you, my beautiful Astrid, I present you with this gift as a symbol of my love and excitement to being your husband at last." Handing the gift over to her, Astrid suddenly gasped, and looked up at Hiccup with a joyful expression.

"Hiccup, it's beautiful!" she exclaimed happily as tears filled her eyes.

The gift that Hiccup had presented her with was a yew hair comb, carved from a single chunk of wood with undulating patterns of light and dark in the wood. It was curved like the crescent moon, with a sunflower carved into the centre middle of the band and vines leading out to the limbs of the comb. The teeth, fine as pine needles, themselves curved backwards; this meant that the comb cupped Astrid's head perfectly, holding back her golden locks without putting any pressure on her head – the comfort being evident as soon as she wore it.

Tucking the hair comb securely in her hair, Astrid looked up at



Hiccup with a bright smile on her face. Just as Hiccup was about to smile back, she suddenly grabbed him by the vest and dragged him to her, meeting her lips with his in a passionate kiss. Giving a squeak of surprise, Hiccup went still for a moment, before suddenly smiling against her lips, as he reached up to cup her face in his hands, kissing her back willingly. As the cheers of the Vikings were heard in the background though, Hiccup gently released her lips with a warm smile at her, before stroking her hair back and sitting back down beside her. "I love you," he said quietly to her as he kept a firm grip on her hand.

Astrid beamed. "I love you too," she replied, a little tearfully. Just as Hiccup was about to answer though, he was suddenly interrupted by his mother's voice.

"With the toasting of the mead, and the gifts presented, let the feast begin!" she said cheerfully.

"Thank gods," Hiccup mumbled to himself, resulting in a laugh from Astrid. As the feast began, Hiccup and Astrid, along with the rest of their family and wedding party didn't have to move as Vikings began to move up and down the table with dishes of food and drink. It was rare for a celebration on Berk to be so big, so they were really going all out that night for the wedding of their Chief. As Hiccup and Astrid were served their food, Hiccup looked towards Astrid with a loving smile. "You know," Hiccup said with a disgusted look on his face, "I'm going to get rid of those awful traditions out of our wedding laws sooner or later. \_No one\_ \_should\_ have to be that embarrassed in their lives." Hiccup shuddered. "Why those traditions even got started in the first place is a mystery to me."

"Tell me about it," Astrid agreed with a disgusted look on her face. "If it was done in private it wouldn't be so bad. But that was honestly the most embarrassing thing I've ever had to do." Astrid sighed. "\_Then\_ \_I\_ had to go and forget the words too," she said with a blush.

Hiccup held her hand tightly. "I almost did too, don't worry. It's over now anyway," he said gently.

"Don't worry, dear," Valka said as she suddenly sat beside her son. Bending forward to see Astrid better, she gave her a reassured smile. "I messed that vow up too. Plus I wanted to run away and hide after Stoick actually \_dropped\_ the hammer into my lap, in a hurry to finish it." She sighed sadly at the memory. "He messed his up too. Honestly he was more nervous than I'd ever seen him on our wedding day." Valka's eyes filled with tears as she thought about it, but as she quickly blinked them back, she suddenly felt Hiccup's gentle hand in her own. Looking at him, she saw him squeezing her hand in reassurance with a kind smile at her. Squeezing his hand back, Valka's emotions vanished as quickly as they appeared.

"Mum, are you sure you'll be alright at home?" Hiccup asked her worriedly. "Astrid and I will stay with you for awhile longer if you need us too."

"We wouldn't mind, Val," Astrid said quickly.

"Nonsense," she said quickly as she gave them a stern look. "You are newlyweds now; you need your own space. I'll be just fine, darling, I

promise. Besides," Valka suddenly looked at the dragons playing in the middle of the hall, Cloudjumper among them, "I have Cloudjumper with me, I'm not alone" she insisted.

"Are you sure?" Hiccup asked anxiously.

"Hiccup, it's your wedding day," Valka said sternly. "You shouldn't be worried about your mother."

"I can when I've only known her for 3 months," Hiccup said tenderly as he kissed her cheek. Giving him a smile, she suddenly gave a stern look to both of them.

"I'll be fine," she said. "Now, stop worrying, or I'll leave," she grinned.

"Alright you win," Hiccup said with a laugh, before he turned his attention back to the dragons, only to find they were no longer in front of him. Frowning, he turned to ask his mother if she had seen them, when he suddenly saw a black blur beside him. Wheeling his head around, he just caught Toothless eyeing off a piece of fish on his plate with a gummy grin.

"Oh no, you don't bud!" Hiccup laughed as he moved the plate from his dragon's sight. "You got plenty of food earlier, you're not having anymore." Giving his rider a pouting look, Toothless plopped down next to Hiccup's chair, refusing to move. Shaking his head, Hiccup looked down at the stubborn Night Fury. "And you call yourself the alpha, you big baby," Hiccup teased him. Looking back up at his rider, Toothless huffed and smacked his tail against Hiccup's leg. Hiccup raised his eyebrows. "Oh sure, that's really going to work, buddy," Hiccup said with a laugh.

Amused by the scene in front of her, Astrid couldn't help but laugh. "What's up with him?" she asked with a grin. Just as Hiccup was about to answer though, he suddenly gave a snort and pointed behind her. Looking back, Astrid sighed loudly as she saw Stormfly eyeing off a piece of chicken on the table in front of Astrid. "Something tells me we spoil these two too much," Astrid said with a groan. "They're going to run our household, not us."

"Toothless already thinks he does," Hiccup mumbled. "Yet you'd think he got enough attention as it is." Grinning at his pouting dragon, he gave a sigh before giving in and giving him the fish on his plate.

"You spoil him too much," Hiccup heard Astrid say. As he looked round though, he snorted as he caught Astrid sneaking food to Stormfly. Hearing his snort, Astrid wheeled her head around with a sheepish grin upon her face.

"And you say I spoil Toothless," Hiccup said with a grin. "Something tells me we don't need kids, we have two big babies right here." He looked down at his dragon with a teasing smile. "I think we know who rules our household, and it's not us."

Astrid and Valka laughed. "As long we can all get along with living together, I don't mind," Astrid said. "I'm worried as to how Toothless will handle both of us living together."

Hearing the worry in her tone, Toothless got up and sauntered over to her, nudging up against her chest with a gummy smile. Stormfly did the same and went over to Hiccup, nudging her head against Hiccup's with a small squawk, leading in small smiles from both Vikings.

"I think that answers our question, Astrid," Hiccup said gently as he gently stroked the Nadder head. "Both of them are willing to accept us." He smiled at his dragon nuzzling up Astrid. "Toothless was looking forward to you joining the family anyway."

Astrid looked down at the dragon with a warm smile as she rubbed his chin. "I thought you would have," she said cheerfully before Toothless heard the commotion of a few dragons at the back of the hall. As he ran off to deal with it, Stormfly joined him, soon followed by Cloudjumper. The dragons had gone from childish to mature in a matter of a few seconds.

"Amazing how much those two can change in a matter of seconds," Hiccup said with a low chuckle. "At least we know there won't be any fighting in the household from jealous dragons though."

"With how spoiled they are, I think there'll be plenty of that still," Valka said teasingly. "You spoil them more than I spoil Cloudjumper."

Hiccup gave his mother a teasing grin. "Oh really now?" he asked. "Because I thought I just saw you sneaking a piece of fish to him just now as well."

Valka looked back at her son in surprise, before she gave out a laugh. "Alright, guilty as charged," she confessed. "My dragon is spoiled as yours." Giving the couple a grin, she suddenly stood up and walked over to Gobber and a few other Vikings, leaving the newlyweds to have some time to themselves.

"Did we just scare her off?" Astrid asked worriedly.

Hiccup laughed. "No, she's leaving us alone for awhile," he said. "Believe me, if mum was upset or mad, you'd know about it. I learnt that the hard way" Hiccup said with a shudder.

Astrid raised her eyebrows. "What did you do?" she asked curiously.

"Burnt myself out with duties," Hiccup shrugged. "And here I thought \_dad\_ could get mad. 20 years with dragons and mum can \_rival\_ one when mad."

"Remind me not to get on her bad side then," Astrid said in amusement, as she tried to imagine Hiccup being scared by his \_mother,\_ of all people.

"I wouldn't get on your bad side either, milady," Hiccup replied, leading to a laugh from the young woman. Laughing with her, Hiccup pulled her closer to him and wrapped his arm around her shoulders as he met his lips with her hair in a gentle kiss. Sighing happily, Astrid lay on his shoulder in content as she stared out over the Great Hall at some Viking children playing in the middle of the hall with their dragons. Smiling widely, Astrid suddenly looked back up at Hiccup.

"How many kids do you want, Hiccup?" she asked suddenly, causing Hiccup to blush crimson as he looked down at his new wife.

"Isn't it a bit early to ask that, Astrid?" he asked quickly.

Astrid laughed at how uneasy he was with the topic. "It's just a question, Hiccup," she said. "Of course it's too early for it yet, but when we do have kids, how many do you want?"

"I...I don't know," Hiccup confessed. "At least 2. I never really liked being an only child."

"Neither did I," Astrid said with agreement. "I say 3 or 4, but 2's a good number."

"Isn't 4 pushing it a little?" Hiccup asked weakly.

Astrid giggled. "Yeah, I guess so," she agreed. "What would you like when we have kids?" Seeing Hiccup look at her in confusion, she rolled her eyes with a chuckle. "Boy or girl?" she asked. "I know you can't choose, so don't be smart," she said with a grin as she saw him about to retort.

"You know me too well, milady," Hiccup said with a smile, before he frowned thoughtfully. "Well to be honest...I'd love to have a little girl," he said with a wide smile.

Astrid sat up and looked at him with a small smile. "Why's that?"

"Well, in 300 years, Berk has never had a female Chief. The eldest has always been a boy, coincidentally enough," Hiccup explained. Reaching up to play with a loose strand of Astrid's hair, he smiled wider. "I'd love to see a female Chief to be honest, and I'd love to have a strong little girl just like her mother. The village can only handle one of one at a time" he chuckled.

Astrid blushed. "And what if we have a little girl that does look like you?" she asked. "Or a boy?"

Hiccup smiled. "I wouldn't mind, no matter what. As long as the baby was healthy and loved, I wouldn't care if we had all girls or all boys, or both genders, I would be happy." Giving Astrid a peck on the cheek, he laid his head on hers. "I just have a soft spot for strong women, and I'd love to raise a strong girl just like you."

"Do you always know what to say?" Astrid replied with a grin.

"Not all the time," Hiccup said a cheeky grin, resulting in a snort from his bride. Pulling Hiccup towards her, she met her lips with his for what felt like the hundredth time that night; not that either was complaining of course. Reaching up to cup Astrid's face in his hands, Hiccup responded to her kiss contentedly, as she wrapped her arms around his neck.

"Seriously, do we have to put up with this all night?!"

Breaking apart from their kiss, Hiccup and Astrid saw Tuffnut down the table with a revolted look on his face. Remembering what he had

been told earlier, Snotlout quickly punched Tuffnut to shut him up, telling him to shut up, resulting in a grin from both Hiccup and Astrid.

"Well that moment's ruined," Hiccup said in irritation.

"There'll be other moments," Astrid said with a laugh. "At least they didn't ruin the ceremony anyway." Astrid suddenly looked at him with love filling her eyes. "By the way, who would have thought you could be so...eloquent in your vows, babe." She giggled. "I was almost embarrassed to follow you!"

Hiccup chuckled. "A lot of practice," the young man admitted. "I spent weeks on end practicing in front of Toothless, and believe me, they didn't start off so well." He thought back to the look on the Night Fury's face when he first spoke them. "The look on his face said it all. It was a look that obviously meant 'would you really say that?'" Taking her hand, he gave a loving smile. "I'm glad I practiced them because I didn't want to say something bad. I wanted to say everything I felt."

"So did I," Astrid said. "I'm just glad it turned out the way I wanted. For awhile I thought for sure I was going to forget something in them." Looking out at the assembled Vikings around the hall, she gave a sigh of content. "It's been a good day to be honest, and it's turning out the way we want it too." Spotting Bucket off to the side, she giggled. "And Buckets obviously been trying to paint our wedding portrait for ages," she said as she nodded towards him. "Why he just didn't ask us to pose I don't know."

"Doesn't want to disturb us obviously," Hiccup said.

"I'm just glad the embarrassments have been kept to a minimum today," Astrid said thankfully.

"Um, I think you've spoke too soon," Hiccup said nervously. "I think Gobber is about to call everyone to attention." Giving a frown, Astrid followed Hiccup's line of sight and saw Gobber was standing up on one of the tables, with a mug in one hand and Toothless beside him.

"So much for my best friend, he's in on it!" Hiccup said with a laugh, as Astrid groaned and buried her head in her hand. Toothless suddenly gave a deafening roar, immediately silencing everyone in the hall. Feeling heat suddenly creeping to his cheeks, Hiccup quickly looked at Astrid who was hiding her face. "Think we can make a break for it?" he asked faintly.

"Attention, Vikings!" Gobber yelled out enthusiastically. Hiccup groaned, nope, it was too late. "It is now time for the speeches to begin, spoken by myself, Astrid's father, and then Hiccup himself--"

Hiccup blanched. He had forgotten he was meant to speak. Obviously Astrid had too, because she suddenly looked up from her hand with a serious look on her face.

"If you embarrass me, Hiccup, you're sleeping at your old house tonight," she threatened. Gulping loudly, he nodded and gave her hand a squeeze in reassurance.

"I won't Astrid, I promise."

"Right, I'll start," Gobber said with a grin. Hiccup and Astrid groaned. "I know I wasn't asked by Hiccup to do a speech, but considering his father can't be here to give one, I'm here to stand in."

Hiccup tensed. So that's why Gobber was speaking. Because he knew what his father would have said if he had been there. Seeing his eyes glaze over, Astrid reached out and took his hand tightly in her own. Looking at her with a grateful smile, he squeezed her hand back gratefully. Looking over at his mother, he saw she was also a little tearful, but as he reached out to take her hand, she shook her head at him with a smile. This was his moment.

"Anyway," Gobber continued. "Well, who would have thought we'd be here celebrating Hiccup's wedding today considering most of us thought the day would never happen-"

Hiccup cleared his throat in annoyance while Astrid tried to hide her chuckle.

"-so soon, I meant to say" Gobber quickly said. Giving a snort, Hiccup hid his face in his hand. "But here we are, I guess. At 20 years old, the lad has not only married his soul mate, but has also found himself Chief of Berk." Gobber gave a sigh. "I know how much Stoick would have loved to be her today to see this lad, and I can assure you he would have been so proud of the both of you today."

Biting his lip, Hiccup tried to stop himself from emitting a sob that was building in his throat. He knew how much his father had wanted to see he and Astrid make it official, yet he had waited too long. Now his father was missing from the most important day of his life, leaving his best friend to say the things he would have said. The more he thought about it, the more his vision became blurred and before long the tears had spilled from his eyes. Emitting a great sniff, Hiccup went to wipe his eyes, only for Astrid to beat him to it, tears in her own eyes, before she lay her head on his shoulder. Laying his head on top of hers, Hiccup gave a nod to Gobber to continue who had stopped in respect for the young man. He nodded back.

"I've known you both since you were babes, and to see you both come so far makes me as proud as he was. Heck, I remember Hiccup as a little kid in the shop, clumsy and accident prone, always trying to prove himself and get Astrid's attentions-"

Astrid giggled as Hiccup blushed as bright as Hookfang's scales. He just had to bring that up!

"-yet always failing," Gobber said with a chuckle, before he turned to Astrid. "You have no idea how often he came up with some harebrained scheme to get your attention. He was a smart kid, always trying his hardest, so determined to prove himself to everyone that he would mess everything up." Everyone laughed, except Hiccup, who groaned, but couldn't help a small grin appearing on his face. "Astrid, I've known Hiccup since he was a kid, and I know him better than anyone. I hope you have patience because you're going to need

it. You'll have to get used to some sort of invention he comes up with or some silly idea. Considering you've been with him for 5 years though, I'm sure you're used to it."

"You have no idea," Astrid said with a grin, resulting in an amused look from Hiccup.

"Yes, I guess you would be," Gobber agreed with a chuckle. "Anyway, when I found out that you two were finally going to make it official, I couldn't have been prouder, and I can just imagine your father saying, it's about time as well. I've seen you two over the past 5 years and I can honestly say you two have gone from awkward to soul mates in such a short time. I admit 10 years ago I could never have imagined you two together, but today, I couldn't imagine you with anyone else. Hiccup, Astrid, you have both come a long way, and I know that as husband and wife, you will make amazing leaders. I know you will both support each other, and keep each other grounded. Just remember though; be honest and truthful to each other, as well as supportive and you won't go wrong. It was an honour to witness your wedding today, and I think I can speak for everyone here, when we say, congratulations and I wish you both a lifetime of happiness and love together. To Hiccup and Astrid!"

"To Hiccup and Astrid!" the other Vikings chorused loudly, as they broke into applause, Hiccup and Astrid whistling as he got off the table. As he did so, Amund suddenly stood up on the table instead.

Hiccup's face paled. "Oh no," he said worriedly. Looking at Astrid, he gave her a weak smile. "Is your dad prone to embarrassing people?" he asked nervously.

"Not usually, but after a few meads, who knows?" Astrid said honestly, resulting in a loud groan from Hiccup. Astrid looked at him with a snort. "What are you so worried about? It'll be me who he embarrasses, not you!" she said as Amund began to speak.

"On behalf of my wife, Ansfrida, I want to thank you all today for witnessing my daughter's marriage to Hiccup. It's safe to say that this is one day I never expected to come so soon, or with who she married-

"I take it back," Astrid whispered to Hiccup who blushed again. In all his 20 years, Hiccup didn't think he'd blushed as much as had in one night than he had in his whole life!

"-I admit it. If Astrid had come home before the war ended and said she was seeing Hiccup Haddock, I would have protested. I'm ashamed to admit it, but I would have. No offense there lad" Amund said quickly to a flushing Hiccup who just waved it off.

"I know Amund, none taken," he said with a grin.

"But seeing my daughter with Hiccup these past 5 years, I now know, and admit that she couldn't have chosen a better man. Both in position and personality, I'm pleased to say that Astrid chose well. Although being wife on the Chief certainly doesn't hurt, I admit that I've never seen my daughter as happy as she has been these past 5 years. Hiccup has not only brought out the best in her, but has also been a wonderful boyfriend and supporter to her. Hiccup, as your

father-in-law now, I should warn you, Astrid is stubborn, hot headed, a horrible cook, no matter how much her mother teaches her, and determined, and you can put up with all that, you can cope with anything-

"DAD!"

Amund chuckled. "-she is also a very hard person to live with. I guarantee you'll get into some arguments, and you'll be kicked out of your own house at least once in your life, but as you know, she will be your biggest supporter. My advice to you is not argue back, be there for her, and be the loving man I know you have been to her, and you'll have no problems. From Ansfrida and I, I wish you both a lifetime of good fortune and happiness, and I know you'll take good care of her, as she will you. But I can promise you something Hiccup-" Amund said, his tone serious. "-If you hurt my daughter in any way, I don't care if you're my Chief or not, I'll come for you."

Gulping loudly, Hiccup gave a silent nod, before he suddenly found himself grinning. "Don't you worry about that Amund; I think if I ever did do anything to her, which I \_wouldn't\_, I think Astrid would beat you to it."

"Too right I would," Astrid said with a grin. "You think I'd let you get away with anything, oh mighty Chief?"

"I have no doubts, milady," Hiccup chuckled as he kissed her gently on her temple. "I never would anyway. Why would I when I have the most amazing woman on Berk as my wife?"

Blushing furiously, the young woman had no comeback to that as she hid her head in her hands as laughter erupted around the hall once more.

"That's all I ask, Hiccup," Amund said proudly. "Anyway, good luck to both of you, and I wish you nothing but happiness and love. To Hiccup and Astrid!"

"To Hiccup and Astrid!" Everyone cheered once more, before Hiccup nervously stood up. It was his turn. Turning to face his new wife, he gave her a reassured smile before he began to speak.

"I'd like to thank you all for witnessing my wedding to Astrid today. After everything that's happened over the past few months, it's been a day where we could try to forget everything and make the most out of it." Hiccup sighed. "I wish more than anything that my dad could have been here today, considering he wanted to see me married than I did at times-". As a few Vikings laughed, Hiccup managed to smile. "-But I know dad wouldn't have wanted me to be feeling this way on my wedding day. I know how proud he would have been today, considering he always told me how much he approved of Astrid. He always said that she would make an amazing co leader and would keep me in line, and he was right. Astrid is all that and more."

Looking back at Astrid, he saw she was blushing furiously, but her face was lit up with a smile that made her eyes sparkle. Giving her a loving smile, he turned back to the throng of Vikings hanging on to his every word.



"When I was a kid, I used to watch Astrid with the other guys all the time, and wish she would just notice me. Although she didn't, I was always grateful that she never joined in with their teasing. I always thought she was beautiful, and all I wanted was for her to notice me. What I didn't expect was for \_how \_she'd notice me." Looking at Toothless standing beside him, he gave the Night Fury a large smile. "Who would have thought that a ride on our greatest enemy would have gotten me the attention of the girl I'd always noticed? And not only that, I gained a friend. When Astrid and I became a couple, I never realised just how lucky I was. She was and still is the most amazing woman I could have asked for, and I couldn't imagine my life without her anymore."

Walking over to her, Hiccup suddenly took her hand in his own, looking at her with love filling his eyes. "Astrid, you are amazing. Not only have you been there for me when I needed you, but you have also been my best friend. You are the most beautiful and bravest woman I could ever meet, and I know that you are going to not only be an amazing Chieftainess, but a wonderful wife. I don't care if you can't cook, heck, my mum can't either, and it didn't stop my dad from marrying her!" Looking back at his mother, she rolled her eyes with a laugh, which Astrid joined into. "I don't care if we argue at times, or if you're stubborn, as that's who you are, and I couldn't imagine you any different. Astrid, you complete my life, it's sappy, but it's true. I couldn't and don't want to imagine my life without you anymore, and you are a source of friendship, support, love and kindness to me, even on my worst days. You cheer me up and comfort me, help me and are my biggest strength, and I look forward to starting my new life with you. I can honestly say that this has been the happiest day of my life, and I know you will continue to make me happy, and I wish for nothing more than a long and happy life with you."

As Hiccup finished, a few tears spilled from his eyes which he quickly wiped away, as Astrid stared at him in silence for a moment before she stood up and flung herself into his arms. Staggering back a little, Hiccup quickly wrapped his arms around her waist, before capturing his lips with Astrid's as he pulled her close to him. As the hall erupted in cheers and clapping, Hiccup cupped her face in his hands, intensifying the kiss, as they became only engrossed in each other. Burying her fingers into Hiccup's hair, Astrid squealed a little as Hiccup lifted her off the ground, resulting in a laugh from his lips. Looking into his eyes, she gave him a grin. "You are so corny, you know that you big dork?" she asked him.

"Yep," he grinned. "But I still meant every word of it."

Astrid rolled her eyes, before swinging her arm back and making contact with his shoulder. "That's for being so corny!" she said, before she quickly met his lips once more in a swift kiss. "And that's for being amazing" she added with a smile.

"Hey, that's my line!" Hiccup protested weakly, as he pulled her close to him again.

"Hey, newlyweds stop staring at each other and get over here. It's time for the first dance!" Gobber yelled.

"Did he just say dance?" Hiccup asked nervously. He looked down at his leg. "I can't dance!"

"Oh you can too," Astrid said with a grin. "Come on, it's just one dance. It's tradition!" With that, Astrid pulled Hiccup into the middle of the hall, where everyone was standing around waiting for a song to be struck up.

"Great, just what I need", Hiccup said dryly, "an audience to watch me humiliate myself." He looked at Astrid nervously. "Can you dance?" he asked.

"Not really, but it's just a bit of fun. It doesn't matter," she insisted, as she wrapped her arms around his shoulders as a slow song began to play. Wrapping his arms around Astrid's waist in turn, Hiccup slowly began to lead her around the dance floor, looking down at his feet as he did so. Dancing wasn't something he was very gifted at before losing his foot, let alone now. Nudging her foot against his knee, Hiccup lifted his head to look at his wife who was giving him a bemused expression.

"Hiccup, just go with it, don't keep looking at your feet!" she whispered loudly as everyone watched on with grins of amusement. Looking around at the Vikings surrounding them, Hiccup found himself averting his eyes from everyone as warmth spread to his cheeks to his ears as he tried not to humiliate himself. Spinning Astrid around on a high note in the song, he narrowly avoided hitting into a post in the middle of the Great Hall. This was going from bad to worse, Hiccup thought as he heard the barely stifled laughter coming from behind him.

"Nice dancing there, Chief!" Tuffnut sniggered, causing his cheeks to burn even brighter still.

"You try dancing with only one good leg!" Hiccup hissed at him. Frowning at Hiccup's frustration, Astrid placed her hand on his cheek resulting in him suddenly looking at her with a mortified expression.

"Hiccup, what's wrong?" she asked him softly as they twirled around. "We've danced at celebrations before, what's got you so nervous?"

Looking around at the gaping crowd, Hiccup heaved a sigh. "All those times we weren't the centre of attention" he admitted. "Everyone's staring at me, and I feel like I have to be perfect. Heck, I can't dance at the best of times, let alone now!"

Sensing her son's distress on the dance floor, Valka suddenly turned her attention to Gobber standing beside her. Nudging him, she nodded towards the awkward dance her son and daughter-in-law were trying to perform. "What do you say?" she asked with a sudden grin. "Think we should help them out?"

Knowing what she was getting at, his face broke into a large grin. "Oh I think so, Val," he agreed. "It's not like he can get much worse out there."

Walking towards the centre table, Gobber and Valka suddenly got up onto it and looked out over at the crowd. Nodding for Gobber to begin, the blacksmith began to whistle a very familiar tune.

Looking up from his feet in surprise, Hiccup saw Gobber and Valka perched on the high table, Gobber whistling loudly. As he recognised the familiar tune, Hiccup's eyes widened quickly before he looked at Astrid in shock. Knowing where his thoughts were at, she put her hands up in sudden denial.

"I had nothing to do this, I swear," she reassured him with a grin.

Knowing she was telling the truth, Hiccup looked back up at his mother and former mentor as they began to whistle in unison. As they did, the music began to play, backing the pair up as more couples began to join them on the dance floor. Looking around the more crowded dance floor, Hiccup suddenly found himself tapping his hand against his thigh, just like he had when he heard it the first time. At the top table, Hiccup watched as Gobber offered out his arm to his mother who accepted it with a smile while they kept whistling the beginnings of the song. Looking back at Astrid, Hiccup found himself repeating the same action to her, who looked back at him cheerfully and accepted it as Valka's voice was suddenly heard throughout the hall...

"\_I'll swim and\_ \_sail on savaged seas\_

\_With ne'er fear of drowning...\_

\_And gladly ride the waves of life, \_

\_If you will marry me-e." \_

Suddenly enjoying himself, Hiccup linked his arm with Astrid's and as they twirled around each other slowly, other Vikings couples began to join them. Keeping his eyes locked on Astrid's, Hiccup saw a joyful gleam in her eyes as he finally began to relax into the dance. Valka also noticed this, and she nudged Gobber with a look of triumph as she sang the next verse, Gobber joining in; but luckily not as loudly as her.

"\_No scorching sun or freezing cold\_

\_Will stop me on my journey-"\_

Spinning Astrid around, Hiccup suddenly found himself singing the next line despite himself. "\_If you will promise me your heart" \_he sang gently as he and Astrid came to a stop. Eyes widening in shock, Astrid was astonished as she heard the lilted singing coming from her husband's mouth. What had he been talking about? His singing wasn't awful, he was \_good\_. Better than she could have ever imagined anyway! Grinning widely all of a sudden, Astrid's voice picked up where Hiccup had left off.

"\_And love me for eternity\_" she sang nervously. As she looked up at Hiccup though, she found him gazing at her with love filling his eyes. Blushing slightly, Astrid wrapped her arms around him as they continued to dance.

"\_My dearest one, my darling dear, \_

\_Your mighty words astound me.\_

\_But I've no need for mighty deeds, \_

\_When I feel your arms around me!" \_

Wrapping his wrist around hers, Hiccup and Astrid went around each other several times, their faces joyful as they started to laugh. Opening his mouth, Hiccup continued the next verse without a second thought.

"\_But I would bring you rings of gold. \_

\_I'd even sing you poetry, \_

\_And I would keep you from all harm \_

\_If you would stay beside me!" \_

As the music started to pick up, so did they, their feet moving faster than they had ever known them to. It was like Hiccup didn't have a prosthetic leg, as they began to dance faster and faster, twirling around each other like it was nothing at all. As they started to laugh, they barely noticed that almost every couple was now singing and dancing; they only eyes for each other. Astrid gave a giggle as Hiccup finished his verse, before coming back in with her own.

"\_I have no use for rings of gold. \_

\_I care not for your poetry. \_

\_I only want your hand to hold." \_

"\_I only want you near me", \_Hiccup chorused in, a grin plastered on his face as his cheeks got redder and redder from the excitement of it all. Astrid laughed merrily as Hiccup almost tripped at the fast tempo of the music, but managed to stay on his feet as their movements sped up and they started to sing together.

"\_To love and kiss and sweetly hold, \_

\_For the dancing and the dreaming; \_

\_Through all life's sorrows and delights, \_

\_I'll keep you love inside me!" \_

Getting remarkably dizzy, Hiccup couldn't help but continue to laugh as he twirled Astrid around himself, before pulling her close to him to sing the final verse.

"\_I'll swim and sail on savage seas \_

\_With ne'er fear of drowning; \_

\_I'll gladly ride the waves of life, \_

\_If you will marry me!" \_

Upon the final notes, the full hall burst into a loud roaring of applause as Valka and Gobber took mocking bows at the end of the

song. Picking Astrid up upon the final line, Hiccup gazed into her eyes with a warm smile. Breathing heavily from the fast paced dance, he gently placed her back on the ground before reaching up to cup her face in his hands. Astrid's eyes were sparkling as she looked back at him with love filling her features, which Hiccup reflected back. Suddenly grinning at him, Astrid gave his shoulder a light punch.

"Can't sing, huh?" she asked teasingly as she wrapped her arms around him tightly.

Hiccup chuckled lightly. "Well I never thought I could sing, but I'm guessing I was wrong?"

"Oh, you were wrong," Astrid said. "You were amazing!" She gave him a teasing grin. "You sing better than you talk," she teased.

'Hey!" Hiccup said with a laugh. "Well you milady, sound beautiful singing and talking, no doubt about it." He gave her an endearing smile. "You are amazing."

"Yes, I believe I've been told that," she replied with a warm smile.

Rolling his eyes, Hiccup suddenly captured her lips, causing her to stagger back in shock, before quickly closing her eyes. Pulling him close to her, she dug her fingers in his hair, as she kissed him back, ignoring the groans and sighs of the crowd for a moment.

"Oh come on, not again!" Tuffnut groaned in disgust.

Breathing a laugh, Hiccup suddenly pulled away from Astrid, keeping his arm wrapped tightly around her waist as he looked at the Vikings around them. "What, I can't kiss my bride?" he grinned.

"Not when it's happened a thousand times already," Tuffnut mumbled.

Hiccup and Astrid both snorted. "We're tired anyway, Astrid and I will go sit down," Hiccup said with a shrug as he went over to their table before plopping himself back down in his Chiefs chair, Astrid following suit. Looking back out at the dancing Vikings, Hiccup and Astrid were surprised to see Fishlegs and Ruffnut dancing together, identical looks of enjoyment of their faces.

"\_That,\_ I did not expect," Hiccup said as he pointed to them.

"I thought she'd be dancing with Eret," Astrid said, scratching the back of her head.

"Nope."

Turning around, they saw Eret standing by them with a grin on his face. Looking at him quizzically, he gave a chuckle.

"She finally gave up on me," Eret answered with a look of relief on his face. "Don't get me wrong, she'd a nice girl...but, er-"

"She's annoying?"

"Too clingy?"

"Weird?"

Eret snorted. "I was going to say not my type," he grinned. "She is a little annoying, but that's not it. I'd prefer a girl like Astrid here. Tough and caring. And not so, well...clingy."

'Well, you're not having my wife," Hiccup said with a witty grin.

Eret blanched. "That's not what I meant, lad! I-" He noticed Hiccup's grin. "Oh, you were joking," he said with a relieved laugh.

"Of course I was, I knew what you meant," Hiccup said with a laugh. "Why don't you go ask a girl to dance, there's a few girls your age here. They'd be honoured surely?"

Eret looked out at the gathered Vikings. "I guess I could do that," he admitted. "You two coming back out?" he asked.

"Later, we need to catch our breath," Hiccup said. Giving them a slight nod, Eret left them to it, and Astrid took Hiccup's hand in her own.

"And to think, we have two more days of this yet," she said with a chuckle.

Hiccup groaned. "Eh, don't remind me..."

\* \* \*

><p>Siri frowned. "Wait, three?" she asked. "Why did you have three days of that?"<p>

Hiccup chuckled. "As Chief, anything less than a three day wedding celebration was considered bad luck," he explained. "So, we had 2 more days of celebrating after that."

"How could you though?" Siri asked in confusion. "The wedding was over."

"The first day was the wedding, then the next two days were mainly dancing and games," Astrid said. "And a lot of drinking," she added in undertone.

Not catching that last part, Siri looked up at her parents with a wide smile. "So, your wedding day did go well. It sounded so nice." She looked up at her mother. "Do you still have your wedding dress, mum?" she asked.

Astrid smiled. "Of course I do, sweetie. I'll show it you later if you like."

"I'd love that!" Siri yelled eagerly.

"Well...maybe if you like it, I might keep it for you when you get married," Astrid said as she stroked her daughter's hair back.

Before Siri could answer, Hiccup quickly interrupted.

"Don't give my baby girl ideas, Astrid!" Hiccup said in horror. "She's not getting married for a \_long time \_if I can help it!"

Siri and Astrid laughed uproariously at the look of horror plastered on his face. "I don't know Hiccup," Astrid teased. "We were 20 when we married, that's only 12 years older than she is now."

Looking between his wife and daughter wildly, Hiccup looked down as he heard his 2 year old son laughing as well. "That goes for you as well, little buddy," he muttered.

Wiping a tear out of her eye, Astrid leant forward and gave her husband a swift kiss on the cheek. "Don't have a heart attack, sweetie. I was only joking." She smiled down at her daughter. "I'll show you the dress later on, still, though."

Siri nodded. "Ok," she smiled. "Did you have to wear your wedding dress all three nights of your wedding celebrations?"

"No," Astrid answered. "Only a formal outfit, luckily."

"How was the other two days?" she asked curiously. As she asked that though, she was surprised to see a look of embarrassment cross her parents faces.

"Was it bad?" Siri asked mortified.

"No," Astrid said quickly. "Well, the second day wasn't, anyway. But the third..." she trailed off with a sheepish grin.

"Your Uncle Gobber forced more mead into us than either of us had ever drank that night," Hiccup explained awkwardly. "Let's say there's a reason your mother and I don't drink much."

Astrid shuddered. "I'm surprised I ever drank again," she said. "I never want to be like that again."

Siri bit her lip to suppress a giggle. "So... when you say that you don't drink much anymore, does that mean...?"

"We got drunk?" Hiccup said. He shuddered. "Sweetie, with how much your Uncle Gobber made us drink; drunk doesn't begin to cover it."

Siri looked at her parents in amusement. "So...what happened?" she asked curiously.

"Do you really want to know?" Hiccup asked weakly. "You'll lose your faith in us for life."

Siri giggled. "No, I won't daddy. You were younger," she said. Looking up at them with pleading eyes, she begged them. "Please? What happened?"

Hiccup looked at Astrid nervously who just chuckled. 10 years of trying to forget that night was about to come undone.

"You wanted to know what happened, sweetie?" Hiccup asked. Siri

nodded. "Well, let's just say, it was night that your mother and I were \_very\_ keen to forget..."

\* \* \*

><p><em>I hope you all liked the reception because I had a blast writing it! I'm sorry if it did drag on a little though. So as you can tell the next chapter is about their final wedding night celebrations and I think you can tell, it doesn't end well :p From what I have planned, it is going to be hilarious! Hiccup and Astrid are going to be two VERY different types of drunks I can assure you. I've been looking forward to this chapter!<em>

\_Ok, I've had a few requests in reviews as to the honeymoon, and I'm sorry guys, but it's not happening. Remember, they are telling these stories to Siri, and I think I was already taking a risk with them telling her about the fertility traditions and stuff in this chapter anyway. I also can't write that sort of stuff if my life depended on it lol. So, no, I can't do it. Plus, from my research, did you know that the word 'honeymoon' actually derives from the Viking culture from when the newly married couple shared the honeyed mead together for luck for a month after the wedding? They didn't have a 'honeymoon' so to speak. Plus after Hiccup and Astrid recovered from their drunken last night, it was straight back into running the village. So, once again, I'm sorry to disappoint you all, but I'm not getting into that. \_

\_Anyway, \*\*DON'T FORGET TO REVIEW!\*\* :D My number of reviews lately have been amazing and I really appreciate every review I get, so thankyou so much! I've gotten over \*\*20 reviews \*\*\_on both of my previous two chapters :) \_Just remember my rules once again though, NO FLAMES, but KIND constructive criticism is accepted. \_

\_Thanks for reading! \_

## 23. Chapter 23: Drunken Night

\_Here we are guys, this is my final chapter for a few months. Thankyou to everyone who has wished me luck for my internship so far, I appreciate it! :) I'll certainly need it! I'm spending 10 weeks as an intern teacher with a year 3 class, and it's going to a long 10 weeks at that! \_

\_OK, so in this chapter Hiccup and Astrid overdo it a little too much on their final night of wedding celebrations thanks to Gobber, and I can honestly say I loved writing this! :p I have luckily never had the pleasure of being drunk, but my boyfriend, mum and dad all have at least once, and were more than willing to help me out with this chapter! It's mostly Hiccup that's really bad, and there are so sentences that he's hard to understand due to how slurred his speech is, but I hope you can read it. I wrote this whole chapter over a space of 4 nights after planning for internship during the day, so it was a miracle it got finished, but I hope you all like it! I never feel confident on a chapter, so I really hope this is funny! :) Hiccup is very OOC in this chapter, but when a character is drunk, you can get away with anything! :p\_

\_Just another note as well, many reviewers have been asking about storylines for when Siri is a teenager. Please, be patient! I have



storylines for that age planned, but I'm following this story in order, so when these storylines are finished, it will move on to when Siri's 9 and so on. I WILL write these stories, but they are a long way away yet! I don't write these stories at random! Thanks! \_

\_On with the chapter!\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 23: Drunken Night<span>

\* \* \*

><p>"<em>You wanted to know what happened, sweetie?" Hiccup asked. Siri nodded. "Well, let's just say, it was a night that your mother and I were very keen to forget..."<em>

"How bad was it?!" Siri exclaimed flabbergasted. Looking up at her parents embarrassed faces, she noticed her father awkwardly rub his neck as he looked at anything \_but \_her. Beside him, her mother's cheeks were beginning to develop a reddish tinge to them as Siri continued to gaze at them hopefully.

"Was it really that bad?" Siri asked in shock. "You don't have to tell me if you don't want to if it was."

"It was worse for your father in terms of embarrassment," Astrid said quickly. "Whatever was in that drink of Gobber's hit him like a mace to the head, and by the end of the night...well..."

"I was out of it, to say the least," Hiccup confirmed with an embarrassed chuckle. "And acting like a complete idiot."

"Idiot doesn't cover it," Astrid mumbled. "A complete nutcase is further to the truth." Astrid looked down at her daughter with a small smile. "He was so drunk I'm surprised he remembered any of it. Yet here I was, trying to stop him from embarrassing himself all night, and \_I'm\_ the one who didn't remember anything!"

Siri frowned in confusion. "I thought you were both drunk?"

"We were," Hiccup said. "It's just the stuff affected me quicker than it effected your mother. It didn't catch up with her until the next day."

"Urgh," Astrid groaned. "That was the sickest I'd ever been in my life." Looking up at Hiccup, she suddenly gave him a glare. "Yet you managed to wake up with nothing more than a splitting headache!" she exclaimed incredulously. "Yet I was sick for what, three days?"

"Three," Hiccup nodded, before he turned to Siri. "The first official day of our marriage was spent in bed looking after each other" he explained to her. "Let's just say, we never wanted to touch mead again after that night, it's a miracle we did. It's also a miracle your Uncle Gobber survived what he did to us."

"Why?" Siri asked. "Who was mad at him?"

"Who wasn't mad at him?" Hiccup chuckled. "But it was Grandma Valka.

I may not have been outside much for 3 days, but I heard her that's for sure. I never knew someone so softly spoken had that in her. Or that she could use such a vivid choice of words, for that matter. Let's just say Gobber has never offered anyone a drink since then. He's petrified of your Grandmother."

"So..." Siri said slowly, "you and mummy got drunk because of Uncle Gobber, and you embarrassed yourself." She looked at Astrid. "But why did you want to forget the night, mummy?"

"I embarrassed myself by the end of the night, too," Astrid answered with a blush appearing on her cheeks. "Well apparently I did, I still don't remember much. The thing I wanted to forget is how sick I was afterwards. Your dad wanted to forget the whole night."

"Are you going to tell me?" Siri asked with pleading eyes. "I don't care how silly it is, but you're making me want to know!" she giggled.

Hiccup and Astrid sighed. "Alright, we will then" Hiccup relented. "Now, where to start..."

\* \* \*

><p>"No Gobber, we're not drinking that stuff!"<p>

"Oh, come on. It's the last night of celebrations, have some fun already! You've drunk nothing more than your mug of honeyed mead the whole time."

"Yes, we have. We just haven't drunk a lot. We didn't want to end up like you were the first night."

"Ouch, that really hurt, Astrid"

Snorting loudly, Astrid looked up at Gobber with a determined look on her face. "The answer is no, Gobber," she said. "We know what your mead is like; we'd be out of it before the night is out."

"Just try a sip," Gobber protested, sitting down his heavy stein of mead in front of the newlyweds. Leaning over the table, Hiccup spied the contents; a dark golden yellow glistened from within the giant mug. He had to admit, it didn't look as disgusting as his usual concoctions.

Sighing, Hiccup relented. "Okay, one sip, Gobber". A broad smile flashed across Gobber's toothy maw as he handed the young Viking the wooden stein. Gulping then taking a breath, Hiccup slowly raised the vessel to his lips. He could see Astrid rolling her eyes at Gobber out the corner of his eyes. As the golden liquid touched his lips and quickly reached his throat; it was sweet, and bitter, and spicy all at once, not to mention much, much stronger than the mead common in the village. Its strength made him splutter, coughing up any mead that hadn't reached his belly.

"Told you not to drink it," Astrid said with an eye roll.

"No... it's fine," Hiccup spluttered. Coughing once more, Hiccup wiped the tears from his eyes from the unexpected coughing fit, before looking at his wife. "It's not that bad, actually," he

admitted. "Just really strong is all."

"So...you're going to drink it?" Astrid asked incredulously.

"Might have a few, yeah," Hiccup said with a grin. "Gobber's right, we haven't drunk much anyway. A few won't hurt."

Astrid furrowed her eyebrows nervously. "Why do I get the feeling you're going to regret saying that?" she said worriedly.

Hiccup frowned. "Why would you?" he asked. "I rarely drink anyway, it's not like this is a common occurrence."

"True," Astrid said slowly, before she looked at the golden liquid in front of her. Giving a sigh, she looked up at the two men. "You're not going to leave me be until I drink it, will you?" she asked the older Viking.

Gobber grinned widely. "You won't regret it lass," he insisted. "Live a little!"

"Gobber, we're Vikings that ride dragons. It's hard for us to not live a little," Astrid replied in irritation before she picked up the mug in front of her. Taking a sip, she was taken aback by the strength and coughed a little - nowhere near as bad as her husband, mind. "Thor's beard, Gobber, how do you drink this stuff? It's as strong as Ruffnut's boot sweat!"

"Hey! I took my yearly bath, don't complain!" She heard over the hubbub in the great hall.

Knowing her friend was only joking, Astrid burst into fits of laughter before taking another sip of the mead. Coughing once more, she put it down, before looking at Gobber. "Seriously", she asked, "how do you drink this stuff?!"

"Eh, you get used to it," he grinned. Taking a sip from his own mug, he barely winced as the liquid went down his throat. "It's not that strong."

"Are you kidding?" Hiccup snorted. "My throat feels like it's on fire!"

"Yet you're still drinking it," Astrid said as she noticed him taking another sip.

"It's just one, Astrid," he said, before he suddenly jumped at the appearance of a curious looking Night Fury. Toothless smelled the mixture in his riders' mug curiously before going to take a sip himself.

"I wouldn't," Astrid warned him quickly, causing him to look up in alarm. "Unless you want to end up a drunk alpha."

Eyeing the liquid suspiciously now, Toothless gave his rider a strange look before wondering off to join Stormfly and Cloudjumper. Laughing at the dragons sudden change of mood, Hiccup went back to his mug of mead, only to splutter once more.

"Seriously, Gobber, you must have iron guts!" he said as tears filled

his eyes from coughing. Looking over at Astrid, he looked at her in awe as she took a sip of her own without as much as a wince.

"What?" she said with a grin. "It's not my fault you have a weak tolerance."

"Hey!"

Shaking her head with a laugh, Astrid went back to her own drink. Despite the strong reactions from the two of them, it didn't take long to finish the mugs off, and once they did, they placed them back down in front of them.

What they didn't expect was for Gobber to replace it immediately.

"No, Gobber," Astrid protested quickly as he replaced her drink. "We've had one, we don't want anymore."

"Come on, it's not that bad," Gobber said with a chuckle. "You're alright at the moment aren't you?"

"Yeah," Astrid said slowly as she looked into her full mug. "But I've seen you with this stuff. You can be fine one minute and out of it the next."

"Well, it's not stopping Hiccup."

Looking around at Hiccup, Astrid saw her husband taking a sip of the second mug. Looking at him in shock, Astrid sighed and went back to her own drink, but only to appease Gobber. She knew Gobber wouldn't leave them alone until he was satisfied that they were having a good time. When they were done, they expected Gobber to finally let up. They couldn't have been more wrong. Instead, he just filled them back up, over and over again; every time it was empty he'd encourage them to have another. Not wanting to be rude though, the newlyweds just accepted the offer and kept drinking the mixture every time he placed another in front of them. After a couple of drinks, they no longer coughed and spluttered after every sip, and they began to feel relaxed and joined in with the talk and laughter at the table.

By the end of the night though, they'd experienced anything but a good time.

Several hours after their first mug of the mead, Astrid's vision became to swim in and out of focus as her head started to ache. She'd lost count of how much of the stuff she'd drunk, and her stomach felt as if it was churning. Looking at Hiccup beside her, she saw his eyes were out of focus as he held his head in his hands. Looking around the hall, Astrid spotted Valka nearby playing with the dragons and as she stood up, she felt her head spin. Leaning against the table, it passed as quickly as it came and she began to make her way over to the dragon woman, who looked up as she approached. She frowned.

"Astrid, are you alright dear? You look awfully pale" Valka said worriedly as she took note of the pale colouration on the young woman's cheeks. Placing a hand to the girl's forehead, she narrowed her eyes as she didn't feel any warmth present.

"I don't have a fever, Val," Astrid assured her. Holding a hand to her head, she let out a slight groan. "Although, I will have a splitting headache by morning thanks to Gobber's so called mead."

Valka's eyes widened in alarm. "Astrid," she said slowly, "how much of that have you had?"

Astrid frowned as she tried to recall just how she'd had. As she did, her head pounded and she closed her eyes. "Um...I'm not sure... I think I lost count after... 6?" she admitted.

"6!" Valka screeched. "That's twice the amount you should have in a lifetime, let alone one night!" She looked over at Gobber nearby, talking to a couple of other men before shaking her head. "I can't believe him!" Valka said furiously. "I \_told \_him not to force that stuff on others, yet he doesn't listen." She looked back at Astrid sympathetically. "That stuff shouldn't be drunk by Viking or dragon. It's awful. Has Hiccup had any?"

"He's had as much as me," Astrid said slowly.

Valka paled before looking over towards her son who was now on his feet and staggering across the Great Hall. "Oh, this isn't going to end well," she said with a nervous edge to her voice. "Hiccup drinks less than you; it's going to hit him hard." Watching as the young Chief ran into a pole in the middle of the room, she winced. "Scratch that, it \_has\_ hit him hard," she said. "In more ways than one."

"I'm going to kill Gobber," Astrid growled as she watched her husband get back on his feet uneasily, before stumbling back a few steps as he did so. Grinning like a loon, Hiccup quickly put his arms up as people stared in him uneasily.

"I'm okay...I'm okay...didn't...\_hic...shee the pole," Hiccup slurred as he uneasily walked forward.

"Scratch that, Gobber's dead \_right now\_!" Astrid screeched angrily as she stormed over to the blacksmith who was watching Hiccup's antics with a bewildered look upon his face. Seeing Astrid storm over to him, with her eyes flashing dangerously, he gave her an awkward grin.

"Um, what happened to Hiccup?" he asked nervously.

"You're what's happened to him!" Astrid screamed. She winced a little as her head throbbed. "Thanks to your so called mead, my husband can't even walk straight!"

"\_I'll swim and\_ \_sail on savaged seas\_

\_With ne'er fear of drowning!\_"\_

Astrid's eyes widened. "Oh please no," she groaned. As she turned around though, she saw her husband twirling around like an idiot in the middle of the Great Hall, singing for dancing and dreaming at the top of his lungs. His voice was slightly slurred, and was the worst sound the young woman had ever heard in her life. Now she saw where his opinion on his singing came into play. At this point in time, she

would \_prefer \_Meatlug and Fishlegs singing.

Gobber chuckled sheepishly. "Seems like the lad may have had a little \_too\_ much."

"YOU THINK?!" Astrid yelled angrily, before she yelled in pain at the throb in her own head.

"You have too, lass," Gobber noted with a sigh. "I'm sorry, I didn't realise you had drunk so much. Or you'd get affected this badly."

"Well, we did," Astrid said through gritted teeth.

"I'll try to calm him down for ya, Astrid. Maybe he should go sit down," Gobber offered.

"I think it's a bit late for that now, Gobber," Valka said in irritation. "Hiccup's beyond help tonight. He's past drunk." As if to back up his mother's words, Hiccup's singing suddenly got louder.

"\_My dearest one, my darling dear,\_"

\_Your mighty words astound me.\_

\_But I've no need for mighty deeds,\_"

\_When I feel your arms around me!" \_

Turning their attention back to the young man, both Valka and Astrid winced as they saw him dancing around with himself, linking arms with an imaginary partner. Red with embarrassment, Astrid looked up at her mother-in-law, looking mortified at the sight.

"I'm so sorry, Val," she said. "I never knew Hiccup would get this bad."

"It's not his fault," she sighed. "Too much of that stuff sends anyone crazy, except Gobber."

"But I'm fine," Astrid said with a frown. "I feel a little sick, but I'm not dancing around like a loon anyway."

"You might have a stronger tolerance," Valka explained gently. "But I think you'll feel it in the morning, trust me."

"I'm already feeling it, in more ways than I want," Astrid said, as she watched her husband's antics. Now going from dancing with an imaginary partner to a jig, Hiccup was dancing around the entire length of the Great Hall, only narrowly avoiding hitting into Vikings and dragons alike. Not only that, but his voice was also getting louder, more obnoxious and less audible as he continued his drunken performance.

"To lurve... An' kiss, an sweetly hooold... For the dancing an tha dreamin... Through life's sorrows an delights...I'll keeeep yoooo luuuuuurve inshiiiiide meeeeeeeee!"

"Hey Astrid, what in the name of Thor is up with Hiccup?!" Mulch

yelled, as he swiftly stepped aside to avoid being knocked over by the intoxicated young man.

"Ask him!" Astrid hissed angrily as she pointed her finger at Gobber, who chuckled sheepishly.

Almost everyone in the Great Hall groaned in unison as they suddenly realised what was going on. Gobber and his mead was well known for situations like this.

"GOBBER!"

"What were you thinkin'!"

"You've gotten the lad worse than drunk!"

"Oh come on, he's not that bad!" Gobber protested. He looked out at the young Chief as he was flailing his arms around like a madman, amidst a fit of giggles. Wincing, Gobber turned back to the infuriated group of Vikings. "Okay, he's out of it, I'll admit it."

Astrid turned away from the scene with a drawn out groan. Looking up at Valka, she gave her a pleading look. "Can you help me get him home?" she asked. "He can't keep going like this." As Valka opened her mouth to answer though, they were interrupted by the sound of Ruffnut screaming at the top of her lungs.

"ASTRID! GET YOUR HUSBAND OFF OF ME!"

Face paling whiter than it already was, Astrid wheeled around, only to see Hiccup, first leaning in close to Ruffnut's face, then as he fell to the ground in a heap as Ruffnut shoved him bodily, a look spreading across her face as if a dragons' stable hadn't been cleaned in a month. Standing up, she wiped her face with her hands and flicked them off to the side; "Ugh, that's disgusting," she uttered.

Looking around in confusion, Hiccup blinked a few times before realising that the woman he had just kissed was definitely not Astrid. Blanching, he quickly looked around and spotted his shell shocked wife standing nearby, a look of disbelief upon her face. Blushing furiously, he quickly staggered over to her and flung his arms around her.

"I...I'm so sawry, A...Ashrid, I...I fought it was yooo," he slurred. "I...I never meant to kiss...Ruffnut. I don't even li...like Ruffnut...in that way."

"It's alright babe, it's not your fault," Astrid said gently as she tried not to laugh. Nothing about this situation was funny, yet she was holding back a laugh anyway. "I think you've had enough to drink though, come on let's go home."

"Why...Why would I wansts to go home?" he asked in confusion as his eyes glazed over. "I thought we were havin' fun. We're married now Astrid!" His eyes widened in horror. "We...we are married right?" he asked worriedly.

Astrid sighed, but gave him a gentle smile anyway as she replied,

"Yes Hic, we're married now, don't look so worried."

"Th...Thank Gods," he said cheerfully before he leant in to kiss Astrid. Smelling heavily of mead, and being drunker than she'd ever seen him though, Astrid instinctively pushed him away as the room began to swim around her. Staggering back a little, Valka quickly caught her under her arms as Hiccup staggered into Toothless, who had come to his rider's aid. Looking at his friend in concern, Toothless watched in alarm as Hiccup grinned at him, unable to stand up straight.

"Ha...Hey bud, you...you wanna go for a ride?" he asked through a fit of giggles. Trying to hurl himself up on the Night Fury though, the dragon quickly raced away in a panic to evade the inebriated young man, causing Hiccup to land in a heap on the floor.

"At least someone has some sense," Astrid said as she straightened herself up again, despite the giddiness engulfing her.

"Maybe we should get him home before things get any worse," Valka quickly said. As she went to walk over to her son though, he was back on his feet and heading towards a bright purple Terrible Terror in the middle of the room.

"Ha...Hey little buddy," he giggled. "You wanna go for a ride?"

"He wouldn't," Astrid said aghast.

Stooping, Hiccup began to sit down on the tiny dragon.

"He would," Valka said, her eyes widening in horror.

Grabbing the wings like handlebars, Hiccup sat heavily upon the tiny dragon, and held his arms up. "Let's go little buddy!"

Growling in annoyance though, the tiny Terror wriggled its way free and darted straight for the drunk Vikings' nose, latching on with a defiant chomp. Yelling in pain, Hiccup quickly got up and began tearing his way through the hall, trying to get the little dragon off his nose. Watching the scene unfold, Snotlout, Ruffnut and Tuffnut guffawed with laughter as they watched their leader running around the hall, with a terror attached to his nose and not letting go.

"Now he knows how we feel when they do it to us!" Snotlout exclaimed as he doubled over with laughter.

"Keep running around Chief, that's the way!" Tuffnut interjected with a grin.

"Dragons, 1, Hiccup, 0! Never thought I'd see the day!" Ruffnut laughed uproariously.

"Not the time guys!" Astrid said angrily. "Hiccup could get hurt!"

"It'll let go," Tuffnut sniggered. "As long as he stops running around like an idiot."

Just as the words left Tuffnut's mouth though, Hiccup, unable to see



where he was going, suddenly ran into the high table, and fell backwards.

"Ow," was all they heard.

"That'll do it," Snotlout snorted.

Sprawled out his back, the tiny dragon finally let go of the young man's nose and flew off with an unmistakeable growl. Hiccup groaned from his place on the floor, and made no move to get up.

"That's it, I'm taking him home," Astrid said in irritation. Stepping forward though, she was suddenly overcome with dizziness and felt her vision swim before her eyes. Reaching out for Valka's arm, she held a hand to her head and groaned.

"Are you alright, dear?" she heard Valka ask worriedly as she gripped the girl's arm tightly. Valka's voice sounded like an awfully long way off, Astrid thought. Overcome with confusion, Astrid walked forward to collect her husband from the floor, when she suddenly collided with something. Falling backwards onto the floor, she blinked to clear her vision to find it was the same pole Hiccup had been running into most of the night. Staggering back to her feet, she leant against the pole, and suddenly felt a pain shoot through her head, and a churning feeling in her guts.

"Astrid? Astrid, dear can you hear me?" she heard her mother ask. When she didn't answer her, she heard her father say worriedly, "I think the mead has hit."

Feeling an arm being placed around her shoulders, Astrid's head began to clear a little so she could notice her mother's worried expression. About to say she was fine, Astrid suddenly became nauseous and as she felt her body heave, suddenly became sick in front of everyone present.

"Oh boy, we better get you and Hiccup home," Valka said gently. "You two need to go to bed, not be here that's for sure."

"No complaints here," Astrid moaned as she leant against her mother's shoulder. "I feel like I'm in hel."

Ansfrida chuckled gently. "That's what happens when you drink too much of Gobber's mead, dear," she said. "Now let's get you home."

"But...But I need to clean that up," Astrid said weakly, talking about her accident just moments before.

"Oh no, you're not," Valka said sternly. "You're going home, someone else can do it." Walking over to her son, still lying on his back on the floor, she bent down and she and Amund gently heaved him up. He was half asleep and limp, lightly drooling out of the corner of his lolling head. He mumbled broken and incoherent thoughts as he was carried along by his mother and father-in-law. Toothless quickly raced over to his rambling rider and placed his head against his side in order for him to lean against him, looking at the others in shock. He had never seen his rider this bad before, and he was concerned for his friend as he trudged on with help from his dragon, father-in-law and mother.

"W...Where are we goin', mum?" Hiccup slurred as he leant against her shoulder heavily.

"I'm taking you home, son," Valka said gently. "You're drunk. You need sleep."

"No...No...I'm al...alright," he protested feebly.

"Sure you are, dear," Valka said as she, Amund and Toothless tried to help him down the numerous number of steps outside the Great Hall. Beside him, Astrid looked over to him from her mother's arms.

"Is he okay?" she asked worriedly.

"He'll have a rather large hangover, but he'll be fine," Amund said with a slight chuckle. "I trust you will too, sweetie."

"I'm already feeling it dad, no worries there," she muttered, as she staggered along. It took a long time to get the both of them both home, but once they did, Valka and Ansfrida took them inside, before getting them settled. Hiccup was unconscious before they put him to bed and Astrid not far off it.

"Valka," she said as she slipped quickly into unconsciousness.

"Yes, dear?"

"Do me a favour and kill Gobber for me," she said, before she closed her eyes and thought no more.

\* \* \*

><p>Pounding. That's all Hiccup felt when he woke up the following morning. Slowly opening his eyes, his attention went straight to the throbbing pain in his temples, as well as his extremely dry mouth. Moving to sit up, he hissed in pain, as even the slightest movement irritated his already pounding head. Hearing a loud shout outside the house, he winced and held a hand to his head, emitting a loud groan. What in the name of Thor had he done to deserve this sort of torture? Squeezing his eyes shut, he tensed as he heard the same yell occur outside the house. Frowning, Hiccup listened closer and heard his mother's voice. He opened his eyes in shock. In the 3 months since his mother had been in his life, he'd never heard her raise her voice above a gentle yell, but this was something else entirely. It was a screaming yell. But who was it directed at? Hiccup didn't have to wait long to find out. Despite the fact his and Astrid's house was situated away from the bustle of the village, Valka's voice could still clearly heard.<p>

"YOU THINK THEY'LL BE FINE?!" she was yelling, her voice raising a few octaves as she screamed. "NOT ONLY DID YOU MAKE THEM SERIOUSLY ILL AND DRUNKER THAN I'D SEEN ANYONE, BUT YOU RUINED THEIR FINAL WEDDING CELEBRATIONS! YOU'VE DONE SOME SILLY THINGS IN YOUR TIME GOBBER, BUT THIS IS THE WORST!"

Frowning in confusion, Hiccup tried to figure out what his mother was talking about. Looking over to his wife, he noticed that she was still in her outfit from the night before, with a pale complexion that could rival the whitest of snow. Her hair was askew and her

mouth was open, with a pool of drool gathering on her pillow, dead to the world. As he watched her, a sudden flash of memories danced through his brain.

Then he remembered.

"Oh gods!" he moaned as he fell back on the bed, burying his aching head into the pillows. Had he really done all that? What in Thor's name had he been thinking?! Thinking back to the previous night, he had flashes out of the things he'd done. Dancing like an idiot, kissing Ruffnut, trying to ride a Terrible Terror, as well as running into a pole! He was never going to let down for this. He wouldn't be surprised that his wife would never let him down for it either once she woke up. She'd tried all night to stop him from what he recalled.

Hearing a loud groan from beside him, Hiccup turned to look at his wife as she slowly opened her eyes. Blinking several times, she looked at Hiccup in confusion as she noticed he was still dressed in his formal gear. Then she felt the pounding in her own head. Moaning loudly, she held her head with a wince, making Hiccup chuckle slightly.

"Morning, milady, how are you feeling?" he asked.

"Like Thor himself is hammering Mjolnir into my head," she hissed painfully. She looked up at him, her face paler than Hiccup had ever seen it. "What happened?" she asked slowly.

Hiccup grinned widely. "Oh come on, Astrid, don't pretend not to know for my sake. I know I'm going to be the talk of the village."

Looking at him in confusion, Astrid went to ask what he meant when a sudden wave of nausea rolled through her stomach. Clapping a hand to her mouth, she quickly leant over the bed and emptied the contents of her stomach into a bucket beside the bed. Hiccup winced as he heard her retching loudly, and he carefully pulled her hair back out of the way to avoid any mess. As she finished, she groaned loudly as she resurfaced, wiping her mouth with the back of her hand, her eyes full of tears. Her face was even paler than it had been before she'd been sick, and she was sweating.

"Oh, looks like you're more hung-over than me," Hiccup sympathised. "Yet I drank more than you I think."

She looked at him again with the same bewildered look. "What are you talking about?" she asked again.

Hiccup sighed. "Astrid, you don't need to keep pretending you don't know. I remember it all, so you can't hide it."

"Seriously, Hiccup, what are you talking about?!" Astrid exclaimed in irritation. "The last thing I remember of last night is accepting Gobber's drink. Are you saying we got drunk off \_one\_?"

Hiccup frowned. "Uh, Astrid... you don't remember anything? At all?"

Astrid's eyes narrowed. "No...the last thing I remember is drinking

Gobber's mead," she admit. Her eyes widened in horror. "What did I \_do\_?!" she asked in a panic.

"It isn't what you did" Hiccup said quickly. His face turned bright red. "It's what\_ I\_ did." He looked at her with raised eyebrows. "Are you saying you really don't remember anything?" he asked incredulously.

"My head hurts too much to remember anything," she said with a groan, before she paled once more and reached for the bucket again. When she resurfaced, she gave a long drawn out whine and laid her head on Hiccup's chest. "Do me a favour and kill me now, Hiccup," she groaned. "I feel like death. My head feels like it's about to burst, I feel like crap, and my stomach feels as if someone's squeezing at my insides."

Hiccup looked at sympathetically. "My head feels the same, Astrid. But not the rest" he said quietly. He winced as his head throbbed once more. "I have a feeling the mead affected you worse than me."

"I hate you," Astrid said weakly, as she buried her pounding head into her husband's chest.

Hiccup chuckled gently. "Don't hate me, hate Gobber. He gave you the stuff." Hiccup snorted as she recalled Astrid's threat to him last night. "Although you did threaten him more than once last night as far as I remember."

"That sounds like me," Astrid said quietly. She groaned once more as her head pounded again. Then she had a small flash of the previous night, and she moaned. "Oh gods, I threw up in front of everyone" she said mortified as she lifted her head up to look at Hiccup. "How much of that stuff did I \_have\_?"

"A lot," Hiccup confirmed. She groaned. "But that was nothing compared to me. You spent half the night trying to help me, despite the fact I was a lost cause already."

When she looked at him questioningly, Hiccup sighed and began to recall the events of the past night as he remembered them. As he talked, his face burned bright red, and he looked at anything, but Astrid's eyes. Despite feeling the way she did, Astrid listened and at the end was unable to stop a fit of giggles from emitting from her mouth.

Hiccup frowned. "You didn't think it was funny last night," he said.

Astrid stopped laughing, and gave him a reassured smile. "I'm sure I didn't, but I promise I won't tease you about it. Besides", she said with a shudder, "at least you didn't throw up in front of everyone." As she said though, she suddenly leant over once more with her head in a bucket. As she resurfaced, she was breathing heavily and her forehead glistening with sweat. Burying her pale face in her hands, she moaned. "Oh gods, kill me now. I've never felt so sick in my life."

"I'm going to Lagetha," Hiccup groaned as he slowly got up off the bed. Turning back to caress his wife's cheek, he squeezed his eyes

shut as the sunlight irritated his eyes. "She'll have something for us, I hope."

"I'll be here dying," Astrid replied feebly, as she buried her head in the pillows.

Hiccup chuckled gently. "Please don't, milady. I don't want to imagine my life without you."

Astrid waved her arm at him without looking up. "Just go," she said, her voice muffled in the pillows.

Holding his hand firmly to his head, Hiccup staggered downstairs to go into the village. Toothless was downstairs and as he noticed his rider, he went over to him and gently nuzzled up to him. Smiling down at his dragon, Hiccup gently patted his head. "I'm fine bud," he said as he noticed the Night Fury's worried look. "Just a pounding head is all."

Walking over to the door, Hiccup went to open it, only for it to open before his hand reached the handle, and his mother walked in with the healer, Lagetha. Seeing Hiccup in front of them, they staggered back in shock.

"Hiccup!" Valka exclaimed in shock. "I never thought I'd see you surfaced so early! How are you feeling?" Reaching up to stroke her sons cheek, Hiccup gave her a warm smile.

"Other than my head feeling as if it has a horde of angry wasps rattling around in my brain, I'm fine, surprisingly enough," Hiccup replied with a wince.

"And...do you-?"

"Remember everything?" Hiccup asked. He sighed. "Yes I do in fact. Every embarrassing moment." He looked up towards his bedroom. "But Astrid doesn't remember a thing though, and she said she feels like death." He looked at his mother worriedly. "Is that normal?"

"For Gobber's mead?" Lagetha quickly interjected. She chuckled. "Yes it is. I'll go up and see her now." As she said that, she quickly went upstairs to tend to Astrid, and a few moments later, Valka and Hiccup joined her, so that Hiccup could get some headache herbs from the healer himself. There wasn't much the healer could do for a hangover like Astrid's though, so she gave her some herbs and an order of bed rest, before leaving with Valka trailing behind.

Snuggling under the covers once more, Astrid looked up at Hiccup who was stroking her hair lovingly from above her. Giving him a smile, she held his hand tightly in her own. "I'm sorry you have to spend our first official day as husband and wife taking care of me," she said sheepishly.

Lifting the hand enclosed in his own to his lips, Hiccup gave her a tender smile. "It's the least I can do for you trying to stop me from being an idiot last night. That has to be the most embarrassing thing I've ever done-

"Hiccup?" Astrid interrupted.

"Yeah?"

"When we get over this, let's never speak of this again." Astrid groaned as she felt the pain in her head again. "I don't know about you, but I never want to think of this again."

"Deal."

\* \* \*

><p>Siri laughed uproariously as her parents finished their story, tears rolling down her cheeks as she tried to contain her laughter. Hiccup and Astrid looked at each with bright red faces as their daughter laughed uncontrollably. Finally after a few moments, the girl finally calmed down, and looked at her parents.<p>

"Why were you so embarrassed to tell me that, daddy?" the little girl asked. "It wasn't \_that \_bad." She suddenly grinned. "You rode a Terrible Terror!" she giggled loudly.

"I didn't \_ride\_ one, I \_tried t\_o ride one," Hiccup corrected her with a groan. "The poor thing wouldn't come near me afterwards either." He rubbed his nose as he remembered the incident. "Then again, the little bugger did attack me, but I can't really blame it."

"I wish I remembered that bit out of all of it," Astrid giggled. Siri looked up at her mother in shock.

"You really don't remember any of it?" she asked. "After 10 years?"

"A few flashes then and there, but nothing," Astrid said. "All I know is what I was told." She suddenly frowned as she turned her attention to Hiccup. "Come to think of it, Ruffnut never mentioned that you tried to kiss her."

Hiccup shuddered. "Please don't remind me that I did that", he said quietly. "Even in my drunk state, I can't believe I mistook her for you." He frowned. "But honestly, I think she was as drunk as we were, but she was apparently sick the next day too."

Astrid reached up to cup Hiccup's cheek in her hand with a warm smile. "You were drunk, Hiccup, you didn't mean it," she said tenderly. "Besides, I think most people were drunk the following day, so not a lot of people would have remembered it anyway."

"Thank gods," he mumbled, before taking a hand on his wife's hand on his cheek and kissing it. "But seriously, that was the most embarrassing night of my life. It's no wonder neither of us drink very often anymore."

"I never wanted to drink again," Astrid said truthfully. She sighed. "And by the time I was ready, I couldn't anyway." She suddenly beamed as she remembered the reason why.

"Why couldn't you, mummy?" Siri asked.

Astrid looked at Hiccup with a tender smile, which he returned before

she looked down at her daughter. "I was pregnant with you," she said with a warm smile.

\* \* \*

><p><em>That wasn't exactly a cliffhanger, but I'm still leaving you hanging for those final flashback chapters there, sorry! But anyway, I hope you liked that chapter and that it turned out alright. I've been so busy all week, and I tried to write it as best as I can.  
<em>

\_So that's it for a few months, I'm now on hiatus :/ I finish my internship on the 19th of September, and I will probably have a week break to do nothing after a loaded 10 weeks, then I'll get stuck back into the final flashback chapters which detail Astrid discovering she was pregnant with Siri and her birth, before moving forward to a new storyline. I won't be back full time though until November due to a post internship assignment, but I will still be back temporarily in late September/early October. Thanks for everyone who has read this so far, I appreciate it! \_

\_\*\*So, DON'T FORGET TO REVIEW! Please?! Since this is my final chapter for awhile, please leave a review if you can :) My reviews went down to only 13 last chapter, but it was a long chapter, so I'm OK with it, just as long as it wasn't because my chapter sucked of course! :p The more reviews I get, the more confident I know I did a good job. I appreciate every review I receive. Just remember though, NO FLAMES, but KIND constructive criticism is accepted\*\*. \*\*I just want to see how many reviews I can get! :p Just tell me what was Hiccup's funniest antic! I want to know! For me, I loved writing his terrible terror moment!\*\*\_

\_Anyway, thanks for reading! See you in late September/early October! I will come back, I won't leave you all hanging! :D\_

## 24. Chapter 24: Birthday Surprises

\_Hey guys, long time, no see! :p After a very long break in which I have been on internship, I'm back to writing. I promised I wouldn't abandon this story didn't I? I'm not back full time yet due a number of things still going on, one being that I have yet to finish internship. I have had to complete an extra week after the school holidays which I'm on now, because in week three of my internship, the teacher of the class I was on fell seriously ill with pneumonia and my university decided in my best interests to pull me from the year 3 class I was on at fear of me failing under a casual and put me on a kindergarten class. And that was a big wake up call! I have already passed and my report done, but I have to complete an extra week, an assignment to do, and an interview with the Department of Education to become a full fledged teacher. Bottom Line: I have a lot to do. \_

\_Anyway, welcome to the next chapter in the flashbacks I was working on before I went on hiatus. This chapter details how Astrid found out she was pregnant with Siri. Now, I haven't written in a long while, and if this chapter isn't as good as usual, it's because I'm rusty, so please be mindful of that :) \_

\_By the way, I've noticed a small error in my flashback chapters

given that I have said that Siri is 8 by now. This isn't technically true as she is 2 weeks off turning 8, but since she is so close, I don't think it matters. Just saying this because I'm sure some of you will notice the mistake in this chapter.\_

\_Anyway, on with the chapter! I'm so glad to be back!\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 24 â€" Birthday Surprises<span>

\* \* \*

><p>"<em>I never wanted to drink again," Astrid said truthfully. She sighed. "And by the time I was ready, I couldn't anyway." She suddenly beamed as she remembered the reason why. <em>

"\_Why couldn't you, mummy?" Siri asked. \_

\_Astrid looked at Hiccup with a tender smile, which he returned before she looked down at her daughter. "I was pregnant with you," she said with a warm smile. \_

Siri raised her eyebrows in surprise. She wasn't born for a long time after the wedding from what she knew. Did it really take that long for her mother to want to have a drink again? Or was she confused on the dates? She frowned in confusion.

"What's wrong, sweetie?" she heard her father ask, a hint of uncertainty in his tone.

Siri looked up at her father and gave him a reassured smile. "I'm okay, daddy, I was just thinking..."

"About what?" Hiccup asked her.

Siri looked up at her parents, confusion still evident in her features. "I thought I was born \_ages \_after you got married?" she asked slowly.

Astrid looked at Hiccup in bewilderment. What did that have to do with anything?

"You weren't," Astrid agreed. "But what does that have to do with anything, Seer?"

The 8 year old looked up at her parents with a serious look on her face. "Were you really that sick from Uncle Gobber that it took you that long to want to drink again?" she asked flabbergasted, her eyes wide.

Hiccup and Astrid roared with laughter as their little girl asked this question. So that's what she was talking about! She couldn't believe how long it had taken her parents to want to drink again.

"Yeah, it \_did\_ take that long, sweetie," Astrid affirmed with a laugh. "You were born 2 years after the wedding..."

"2 weeks after our second wedding anniversary to be precise," Hiccup



interjected with a smile. "You always were one for good timing."

Siri giggled. "How so?" she asked.

"Try even the day we found out about you was good timing," Astrid said proudly as she looked at her husband, who smiled so wide it lit up his whole face. "It was daddy's birthday."

Siri looked up at her father, her mouth agape, before she suddenly broke into a wide smile herself. "Really!" she squealed. "You found out about me on daddy's birthday?!" Snuggling into her father's side, she looked up at him and Astrid with a grin. "How \_did \_you find out?" she asked them.

The parents chuckled. "It was daddy's 22nd birthday," Astrid said with a smile. "We were meant to have a day off to plan the party and then have this huge celebration that night--"

"--Hence your mother wanting to try some mead again," Hiccup interrupted with a playful grin before he suddenly winced as his wife's fist came into contact with his shoulder. "Ow."

Siri giggled as she watched her father rubbing his arm, before she looked back to her mother. "Was daddy with you when you found out?" she asked hopefully.

Astrid smiled. "No, he wasn't," she said. Siri's smile faded. "But he found out at his birthday celebrations that night, sweetie." Astrid turned her head towards her husband with a cheeky grin on her lips. "Actually, I scared him before he found out," she laughed.

"That's putting it mildly," Hiccup mumbled. "Your mother decided to trick me into thinking she was sick when she arrived," he explained as Siri looked at him, puzzled. "Scared me half to death."

Astrid chuckled. "You fell for it with Siri and again with Leif," she said, as she teasingly stuck her tongue out at him. "It's not my fault you're so gullible."

"Hey, in my defence, your symptoms were different both times, so how was I supposed to know?!"

Siri frowned. "What does daddy mean?" she asked her mother.

"He means I didn't have morning sickness with you, so when I was pregnant with Leif, the signs weren't easy to pick up," Astrid explained with a smile. "With you, it looked like I was overworked."

"Huh?"

"She means she was tired," Hiccup said gently. "Most days she wouldn't get out of bed for ages, and she ate so much, she could beat Snotlout in an eating contest." Astrid shuddered as she remembered that. "Actually, that was what made your Grandma suspicious that day. If it wasn't for her, we wouldn't have found out at that time," Hiccup said cheerfully. "Although she scared me being so mysterious too," Hiccup muttered to himself.

Not hearing that last part, Siri smiled. "Can you tell me what happened, daddy?" she asked eagerly as she snuggled up to her parents once more.

"Oh, I'm sure one more story won't hurt," Hiccup said with a grin, as he cuddled his daughter to his chest tightly. "You want to know what happened just at the party, or the whole day?" he asked, already knowing the girls answer.

"The whole day," Siri answered predictably with a grin.

"Knew it," Astrid laughed. "Alright, well..."

\* \* \*

><p>"Eh-ee-eh-e-ehheeeeeee!"<p>

Hiccup awoke with a loud groan. Those damn Terrible Terrors never knew when to shut up, especially early in the morning. Stuffing a pillow over his head, the young Chief buried his head into the pillows in an effort to block out the sound. Next to him, his wife barely even stirred at the offensive noises coming from outside the house, even when it seemed it was right in the middle of their room.

"Eh-ee-eh-e-ehheeeeeee!"

"Alright, alright, you win! I'm awake!" Hiccup groaned in annoyance as he reappeared from under his pillows. "Snotlout was right," he mumbled, "-they do need to learn how to shut up." Turning over with a loud sigh, Hiccup was surprised to see that, despite the loud racket coming from the roof top, that Astrid was still deep in slumber. In fact, it looked as if she hadn't even heard the little dragon. Strange, Hiccup thought. Astrid was usually such a light sleeper, especially in the mornings. Moving closer to the young woman, he gently tucked a strand of her blonde locks behind her ear before giving her a light peck on the cheek.

"Hmm?" Astrid mumbled as she felt the feather like touch of Hiccup's lips on her cheek, but not making a move to open her eyes. "What do you want, babe?"

Hiccup frowned. Usually when he woke Astrid up, she was more than willing to open her eyes and get ready for the day, but this was the second morning in a row that she had been so hesitant in waking up.

"Are you alright, Astrid?" Hiccup asked her worriedly, as she slowly opened her eyes. "This is the second day in a row that you haven't wanted to get up." He noted the dark circles under her eyes. "To be honest, you look exhausted," he said anxiously as he gently rubbed his finger along the circles under her eyes. "Are you sure you're feeling alright?"

Astrid yawned before giving her husband a small smile. "I'm fine, Hiccup, just a little tired." She yawned again. "I don't know how though," she admitted with a chuckle. "I've been going to bed earlier than you lately."

"And been doing as much work as me around the village, too," Hiccup

said worriedly. "Astrid, I think you need to take a break-"

"I will if you will," she interrupted, sitting up. "Seriously, Hiccup, I do as much work as you do."

"I don't have black circles under my eyes that look as if they are ready to move in with us," Hiccup replied.

Astrid snorted. "Thanks a lot, babe, I feel the love."

"I'm serious, Astrid," Hiccup said sincerely. "I think you need to take a break for a few days. You sometimes do more work than me and that's not fair on you." Cupping a cheek with one hand, Hiccup looked into Astrid's eyes with a serious expression. "Astrid, it's okay to admit you're exhausted. You help me every day, now let me help you. Please?" Kissing her forehead lovingly, he grinned as he saw her heave a huge sigh.

"Fine," she huffed. "But only because it's your birthday." Suddenly breaking into a wide smile, Astrid wrapped her arms around Hiccup's neck. "Happy birthday, babe."

"Why, thankyou milady," Hiccup grinned, before Astrid pulled his lips to hers in a passionate kiss. Closing his eyes, Hiccup wrapped his arms around Astrid's waist, before pulling her closer to him, deepening the kiss in contentment. Until-

"Chief, are you awake yet? We have a problem!"

Hiccup and Astrid broke off the kiss with a loud groan. "Are you kidding me?" Hiccup said in annoyance. "I'm supposed to have the day off!"

"Chief!"

"Hang on a minute!" Hiccup yelled. Growling in annoyance, he got up out of bed and grabbed for his flight suit on the chair beside the bed. "Even on my birthday, duty calls," he mumbled as he scrambled to get into his flight suit, before turning to Astrid with an apologetic smile. "I'm sorry Astrid, I guess I can't spend the day with you after all. I'll try to be back by lunch though," he said before he bent down to give her a swift kiss on her temple.

Astrid smiled. "It's fine, Hiccup, they won't keep you all day. Vikings never miss an opportunity to throw a party," she grinned.

"Tell me about it," Hiccup muttered, before he suddenly broke into a wide grin. "So, does that mean you're finally going to have a go at having a drink again tonight too?"

Astrid grinned back. "I was thinking about it. Surely a year and a half has been long enough?"

"You'll find out soon enough," Hiccup chuckled as he picked up Inferno, ready to leave. "But you won't be partying very long if you don't rest," he said seriously, as he watched Astrid yawn widely against her will. "I've never seen you so tired," Hiccup confessed anxiously, "maybe you should go to a healer-"

"Hiccup," Astrid interrupted with a roll of her eyes. "I'm just tired, not sick." Reaching for her husband's hand, she gave him a reassured smile. "It's probably just as you said. I've been working too much. Have you seen how much food I've eaten lately?" she asked incredulously. She looked down at her stomach with a groan. "I'm pretty sure I've put on weight from it all too."

Hiccup rolled his eyes with a shake of his head. "If you have, it's only noticeable to you," he said with a chuckle, resulting in another eye roll from the young woman.

"You would say that," she said with a grin.

Hiccup chuckled. "I'm nothing, if not serious milady. You don't look any different to me." His eyes fell on the dark circles underneath his wife's eyes. "Well" he said with a sigh, "besides the dark circles threatening to move in of course. Are you sure you don't want to go to a healer?" he asked hopefully.

"I'm sure," Astrid said in annoyance. "Stop worrying. Now go before they barge through the door."

"They can wait," Hiccup said with a cheeky grin. "Besides, can't I get a goodbye kiss from my beautiful wife?"

"Suck up," Astrid replied with a grin. "Besides, do you really need one?" she said teasingly. "You'll only be gone a few hours."

"That's harsh, milady," Hiccup responded with a fake pout. "And on my birthday, too." Looking at Astrid with a pleading expression, Astrid snorted and gave a short laugh. It was amazing how immature her husband could be at times.

"Fine, come here you big baby," she said with a giggle. Grinning in victory, Hiccup leant down to give her a kiss on the lips, when he suddenly gave out a squeak of surprise as Astrid pulled him down to her lips with a forceful tug on his vest, resulting in him landing in a heap beside her. Giggling against his lips, Astrid dug her hand into his messy auburn locks, before deepening the kiss contentedly, to which Hiccup eagerly responded too.

"Chief, are you coming down or not!"

The young couple both groaned in unison at the interruption. For a moment, they'd forgotten about the guest waiting outside as they had become completely engrossed in each other.

Hiccup heaved a dramatic sigh. "Hang on a minute!" he yelled out in annoyance as he turned back to his wife with a small smile. "I'll be back soon," he promised. "In the meantime, rest. Do you promise?"

"Could you stop worrying?"

"Astrid..."

She sighed, but gave Hiccup a warm smile. "Alright, I promise. But only because I love you," she beamed.

Hiccup smiled adoringly at her. "I love you too, milady". Placing a

hand on her cheek, he captured her lips once more in a tender kiss that made Astrid smile against his lips. They had only been married for 17 months, but the young woman was sure that it couldn't get any better than this.

"CHIEF!"

"ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT!" Hiccup yelled as he stood up from the bed. "Seriously, I can't think of a worse interruption than our village, can you?" he asked Astrid as he started for the door. "What else could interrupt us so much?" Shaking his head, Hiccup gestured to Toothless who was waiting patiently by the door, before heading down the stairs.

Astrid yawned and contemplated whether or not to get up when she heard Hiccup from downstairs.

"You guys have the worst timing, you know that?" Astrid could hear him saying, before the door shut. Emitting a soft giggle, Astrid yawned once more before closing her eyes. Maybe I'll stay in bed just a little longer, she thought, before lying back onto her pillows once more.

\* \* \*

><p>Astrid groaned as sunlight hit her eyes. Slowly opening her eyes, she squinted against the brightness in the room, while her eyes adjusted to the new conditions within the space. Emitting a great yawn, the young woman cast her eyes down to the empty spot in the bed beside her. She frowned for a moment wondering where Hiccup had gone off too. Her eyes widened.<p>

"Shit!" she yelled as she scrambled to get out of bed. Looking out the window above her and Hiccup's bed, she saw the sun was fairly high in the sky indicating it must have been almost late morning. Almost lunchtime to be exact.

Realising she must have fallen back to sleep after Hiccup left, Astrid quickly raced around the room, collecting her clothes and hurriedly putting them on. Her eyelids felt heavy as she rushed about the small as if she still needed to sleep some more, but she ignored it. Hiccup would be home soon for lunch with Valka, and if he knew she had slept late, he would be worried about her for sure. He wouldn't leave her alone until she had seen a healer if he found out.

As Astrid placed her shirt over her stomach, she thought it felt a little tight. Looking down, she thought she saw a small bump protruding from her shirt. She was right. She had put on weight. Not having time to worry about it though, Astrid threw her fur hood on around her shoulders before racing down the stairs, running a comb through her hair quickly as she did so, but as she was doing this, she started as the door opened to reveal Valka.

Upon entering the house, Valka looked at Astrid with a look of confusion in her eyes as she watched the young woman race about, as if she had just gotten up. Eyes lingering over her hair and the hand grasped firmly around her comb, Valka's eyes widened in the realisation that Astrid had just gotten up.

"Astrid, did you... just get out of bed?" Valka asked slowly. "But Hiccup told me you were awake when I saw him earlier. How come you're only up now?" Taking note of the less discernible bags under the young woman's eyes, Valka raised her eyebrows in concern. "Lass, are you feeling alright? You look awfully tired."

"I'm fine," Astrid said quickly, as she shoved the comb out of sight. "I just fell back asleep is all. Nothing to worry about."

Valka frowned. "Astrid, that was 4 hours ago. That wasn't just some extra sleep. What's going on?"

"Nothing," Astrid stressed. Noticing Valka's sceptical look on her face though, she sighed. "Alright, I've been really tired lately that's all. Going to bed early, sleeping late, yet still feeling tired and all. Hiccup thinks I'm overworked."

"That may be true if Hiccup hadn't been doing the same amount of work as you, but he's fine," said Valka anxiously. Walking over to the Viking warrior, she looked at Astrid carefully. "Dear, have you considered going to a healer? You shouldn't be this tired no matter how much work you do."

"Hiccup's tried to get me there," Astrid admitted with a sheepish look at her mother in law. "But I feel fine."

"That may be so, darling, but I think you should get checked over. This isn't normal for you," Valka said nervously as she watched her daughter in law yawn again.

"Valka, please, I don't want to worry Hiccup, especially not on his birthday," Astrid fretted, twisting her hands nervously. "Please don't tell him. He's worried enough as it is."

"Alright," Valka promised, although the look of anxiety had yet to leave her eyes. "But only if you let me take you to a healer if it keeps going. You promise?"

After a long pause, Astrid sighed. "I promise."

"Astrid, I'm serious," Valka said gently as she wrapped an arm around the young woman's shoulders. "Although I don't think it's anything bad, I still think it needs a second opinion. It's not normal to be this tired."

Noticing her mother in laws anxious face, Astrid placed her head in her hands with a moan. "Alright", she said as she lifted her head from her hands, "I'll go and see Lagetha tomorrow. I just...didn't want to worry Hiccup," she confessed.

"I think that ship has sailed, dear," Valka explained calmly. "He's already worried, isn't he?"

As Astrid nodded in agreement, she and Valka started as they heard the front door open to reveal Hiccup and Toothless amble in from the light dusting of late season snow outside. Upon noticing his wife, up and out of bed, Hiccup beamed widely before rushing over and giving her a swift kiss on the cheek, before turning to his mother and enveloping her in a hug.

"Hey mum," he smiled, before turning his attentions to his wife. "Good to see you don't look as tired as you did earlier, did you rest up?" Hiccup asked her gently as he took her in his arms tightly.

"All morning, I promise," Astrid said carefully, not noticing the look of frustration on Valka's face as she said it. "Didn't want to be tired for your big party tonight, did I?" she grinned. "Now come on, we better have some lunch so we can go and help set up. Besides, I'm starving."

"When aren't you, these days?" Hiccup grinned as he went over to the kitchen to start serving lunch, with Astrid following. Upon hearing that remark from the young couple, Valka suddenly raised her eyebrows. Something told the Viking woman that tiredness wasn't the only thing unusual about Astrid lately as she watched the young woman start digging into her lunch even before she had sat down at the table.

"Well, Astrid, I never knew you had such an appetite," Valka remarked with interest. "When did you start eating as much as Snotlout?"

"Since she started being so tired," Hiccup replied with a laugh as he watched Astrid eat through half her plate before he had barely touched his. "I think all the work she does has given her a bigger appetite the twins \_and \_Snotlout put together."

"I would say so," Valka said quietly as she started to eat her lunch as well, while looking up to observe her daughter in law every now and then. Before her and Hiccup had even finished their plates, the young woman was up and getting another, without so much as a second thought. If the dragon woman wasn't suspicious before, she certainly was now.

"Gods Astrid, I think you could challenge Snotlout with that appetite," Hiccup told her incredulously, as he watched her finish off her second plate of food. "He could use some competition that's for sure. Aren't you full yet?" he asked weakly as she stood up.

"I am now," she replied. "Hopefully this appetite will go away if I don't have as much to do. Before I eat us out of house and home," she added, as she began to clean up the dishes.

"I'll do that, dear," Valka said quickly as she stood up. Astrid was surprised, but nodded as her mother in law took over before sitting back in the chair beside Hiccup. As she did though, she felt an uncontrollable urge to yawn come over her making her eyes widen in alarm. There's no way she could be tired again! As she tried to resist the urge to yawn though, Valka proved a welcome distraction as she accidentally dropped a plate on the floor and Hiccup quickly ran over to help. As he did, Astrid yawned widely before leaning her head onto her hand, eyes drooping-

"Astrid!"

Astrid started, almost falling off the chair as she heard Hiccup's concerned yell pierce the air. Eyes snapping open, she quickly looked at Hiccup who's eyes were wide with worry, quickly joined by Valka's as she came rushing over. Seeing how tired the young woman looked

once more, she shook her head in disbelief.

"That's it, lass, you're going to a healer," Valka said firmly. As Astrid opened her mouth to protest, she quickly raised her hand to her, cutting her off. "You cannot be falling asleep \_again.\_"

Hiccup frowned as he looked from his mother to his wife. "What does she mean, again?" Hiccup asked her worriedly.

Astrid sighed. "She means that I had only just woken up when she arrived earlier," she said sheepishly.

"But...I thought-

"That I got up after you left?" Astrid guessed. "I was about to, but then...I fell asleep again," she said, her voice getting quieter as she spoke. "For 4 hours to be exact."

At these words, Hiccup paled. He had never known Astrid to sleep this much in all the years he had known her. Heck, he'd never known \_anyone t\_o sleep as much as Astrid had lately.

"Astrid," Hiccup said weakly as he thought about it more. "You need to see Lagetha, this isn't normal."

"No, it's not," Valka agreed sternly, as she crossed her arms in front of her chest. "I'm sorry, Astrid, but Hiccup's birthday or not, we're going to see her." Seeing Hiccup and Astrid's panicked looks, she finally a small smile. "Now I have a feeling I know what it is," she said, "but we have to find out for sure." Turning to Hiccup, she gave him a reassured glance. "I'll have her at the party by dark I promise, you just go and help the others," she said before she and Astrid began to walk out the door.

"But...what's wrong?" Hiccup asked fearfully as they went to leave, Astrid looking more confused than anything as she followed Valka.

"You'll soon see, dear, I promise," Valka said with a sly grin. "Just don't worry; I don't think it's serious. It just needs to be confirmed."

"What needs to be confirmed?" Hiccup asked her desperately.

"You'll see!" was all he got before the door closed on him, leaving him standing in the room in a state of confusion.

"Great, just great." Hiccup looked at Toothless who was staring back in equal confusion. "Why am I always kept in the dark with those two?" he asked the dragon. Toothless shrugged, before placing his head between his wings for a nap, drowning out the sound of his riders' worrying.

"Jeeze, thanks for the help bud."

\* \* \*

><p>All in all, it was shaping up to be one of the strangest birthdays of his life, Hiccup thought, as he walked around the Great Hall that evening, scanning his eyes everywhere in the hopes of



seeing his wife and mother emerge. It was just going on dusk and he had seen neither hide nor hair of either of them since Valka had dragged Astrid out at lunchtime, leading Hiccup to panic at what was going on in that healers hut as he stood around in the hustle and bustle of birthday celebrations on his own.<p>

"Happy birthday, lad!" Gobber said cheerfully as he wondered over to the young man standing all alone by his Chieftain chair in the middle of the hall. Upon hearing his mentor's voice, Hiccup turned to him with a small smile which didn't reach his eyes, a fact that didn't escape the blacksmiths notice.

"What's the matter, lad?" he asked in concern. "You don't look very excited for someone who's celebrating his birthday. Come to think of it-" he started, looking around the hall, "where's Astrid? And Val? Surely they would have been here with you already?"

"I don't know, you tell me," Hiccup muttered worriedly. Looking at his friend, Gobber was taken aback at the look of fear in the young man's eyes. "Astrid has been so tired lately. So tired that after I left this morning, she fell back asleep until \_midday,\_" Hiccup explained anxiously. "Mum said she had only just gotten up when she arrived for lunch."

"Well, the lass \_has \_been doing a lot of work lately," Gobber said thoughtfully. "Maybe she just needs a break."

"That's what I thought," Hiccup said with a sigh. "But she even started going to sleep after lunch, which by the way is another thing." Seeing the look of confusion on his friends face, Hiccup explained more. "She's been eating more than Snotlout and the twins put together lately as well. It's got mum worried enough that she took her to the healer hours ago, and I still haven't seen them." Hiccup gave a panicked look towards Gobber as he said all of this. "What if she's really sick?" he asked fearfully.

As Hiccup had been saying all of this, Gobber's eyes suddenly widened in realisation. Not only had he heard of these symptoms before, but he'd seen it firsthand. Not wanting to spoil the surprise though, Gobber suddenly grinned and placed a hand on the young man's shoulder, causing Hiccup to look at his mentor with a quizzical expression.

"I don't think you have anything to worry about, lad," Gobber said with a small grin. "If I'm right, you'll find out what it is soon enough, I promise."

"Oh come on! That's what mum said. At least put me out of my misery, Gobber!"

"What's going on?" said Mulch who had just joined the conversation, hearing his Chief's loud voice from nearby. "What do you have to put Hiccup out of his misery for?" he asked as he turned to the blacksmith.

"Astrid's at the healers getting a check over. I was telling Hiccup he'll find out soon enough what it is."

Mulch frowned. "And will he?" he asked.

Gobber leant forward and whispered in the man's ear, and within a few moments, Hiccup was even more frustrated as he now watched Mulch's face turn to one of realisation with a large grin.

"Aye, Gobber's right, Hiccup, best leave this to your wife. It'll be fine," he said with a chuckle as he walked off back to his wife, Gobber following behind with an identical grin.

Throwing his arms up in frustration, Hiccup called after the two men. "Seriously?! You're just going to leave me with that? At least tell me if my wife is ill or not!"

Everyone in the hall stopped and stared at their Chief as he yelled after the two men retreating from him. Upon noticing everyone's glares, Hiccup threw his arms up. "What?" he said in annoyance. "I just want to know why everyone is keeping me...in..." Hiccup began to trail off as he finally saw Astrid and Valka enter the hall out of the corner of his eye, "the dark..." he trailed off as he watched Astrid- now dressed in a beautiful long sleeved green dress for ceremonial occasions that trailed behind her like a small train- spot him from where she was and suddenly push through the crowd of Vikings in a rush to get to him. For a moment, Hiccup thought he saw a large smile lighting up Astrid's face as she rushed towards him, but within moments, all he could see was Astrid's hair as she flung her arms around him tightly, pulling him tightly against her.

"Astrid, thank gods," Hiccup said in relief. "I was starting to get worried about you. You've been gone all afternoon." He let go of her embrace to see tears welling up in Astrid's cerulean eyes. Heart shuddering against his chest, Hiccup took Astrid's hands quickly, failing to notice the smile that was also fixed on her face.

"Astrid, what's wrong? What did Lagetha tell you?" Hiccup asked nervously as he pulled her into his arms. "Is it serious?" he asked her weakly.

"Well, it's not \_serious,\_" Astrid said slowly with a grin.

Hiccup paled. "But there \_is\_ something wrong?" he asked anxiously.

"Welllllll..." Astrid trailed off with a teasing drawl. "Let's just say it won't be going away anytime soon, anyway."

"What can we do?" Hiccup asked quickly.

Astrid shrugged. "Nothing we can do" she said calmly. "Just got to wait...I guess..." Astrid looked up as she was talking and saw a look of pure horror etched onto her husband's face, causing her eyes to widen. He looked petrified! Knowing Hiccup was likely to keep worrying if she didn't say something, she suddenly started to laugh and wrapped her arms around Hiccup's neck, looking into Hiccup's eyes.

"Astrid, what are you laughing for? This isn't funny!" Hiccup said incredulously, before Astrid cut him off with a kiss. Eyes now widening in confusion, Astrid beamed widely at him before she reached up to cup Hiccup's face with her hands.

"Hiccup, I'm not sick," she said happily. "I'm having a baby!"

Hiccup froze at these words, not quite sure if he had heard her right. Looking at Astrid, she beamed and nodded at him to confirm, that yes, he had heard correctly.

"You're...pregnant?" he said slowly, as a smile began to light up his face.

"I'm pregnant!" she said joyfully, tears of joy filling her eyes. "8 weeks to be exact" she added with a bright smile.

"You're pregnant," Hiccup repeated, happily listening to the words as they came out of his mouth. His smile grew wider. "Oh gods, we're having a baby. This is amazing!" Suddenly lifting Astrid off her feet, Astrid squealed in surprise before emitting a giggle and wrapping her arms around Hiccup's neck. Meeting Astrid's lips with his, his grip on her tightened as Astrid responded eagerly, neither of them caring in the least at the couple of hundred Vikings now all staring at them from their various positions in the hall. Melting into his embrace, she never wanted to let go as they stood there, oblivious to the world. Until they needed air of course, and breaking off their kiss, breathing heavily, Hiccup gently placed Astrid back on to the ground, before he reached up to cup her cheek, tears now filling his own eyes.

"I love you," Hiccup said, his voice wavering for a moment, despite his smile.

"I love you too," Astrid responded tenderly as she met his lips in a tender kiss. "I'm sorry for making you think I was sick. I didn't realise you were so worried," she said.

"More like petrified," he admitted, but as Astrid opened her mouth to apologise, he shook his head beaming. "I don't care, I'm just happy about what is \_actually\_ is. So, when is it due?" he asked excitedly.

"A month after our wedding anniversary, apparently," Astrid said with a laugh. "This baby sure has good timing on its side."

Hiccup chuckled lightly. "I can't believe we're going to be parents," he said in astonishment. "Like I knew we'd been trying, but it hasn't been that long."

Astrid smiled, before she took a hold of Hiccup's hands gently and guided it to her very small bump already protruding from her stomach. Feeling the small bump that was just there, Hiccup's eyes widened. Astrid had been right in noticing her small weight gain. Upon realisation that that was his baby in there, his emerald eyes filled with tears, as did Astrid's, who quickly sniffed and wiped them away.

"Oh gods, only 8 weeks and the hormones are already starting," she said quickly as she sniffed loudly.

"If you say yours are hormones, care to explain mine?" Hiccup asked her, as his eyes glistened brightly.

Astrid laughed and hit his shoulder gently, before giving him another swift kiss on the lips as Valka came over to them with a wide smile on her face. Upon noticing his mother, Hiccup gave her a grin before crossing his arms in mock annoyance.

"Thanks for tricking me, mum," he said with a grin which she returned.

"Anything for you, dear," she answered with a laugh. "But really, I had an inkling earlier and I decided to let Astrid surprise you. You're not mad are you?" she asked gently.

Hiccup smiled and took her in his arms affectionately with a kiss to the cheek. "No, I'm not mad. You're my mum, about to become a Grandma, I can't stay mad." Looking around at Gobber and Mulch nearby, Hiccup shook his head in irritation, "those two though, I'm not so sure," he added before looking back at Astrid with a proud smile. "Would you mind if I announced it now? This will really make the birthday celebrations."

"Go right ahead," Astrid beamed, as Hiccup excitedly took her hand and led her to the raised platform.

"Excuse me everyone!" Hiccup yelled loudly over the bustle of the crowd. When they didn't stop talking, Hiccup looked at Toothless who immediately gave a loud roar, instantly silencing the crowd of Vikings.

"Thanks, bud," he said in relief, before he turned to face the gathering of Vikings in front of him. "First of all, I want to thank you all for coming here tonight to celebrate my 22nd birthday, it means a lot." As talk started to arise about that though, Hiccup raised his hand to silence the hall, which was immediately affective. As he did so, he turned to look at Astrid with a loving smile, which she returned, before enclosing her hand in his. Turning this attention back to the throng of Vikings, he beamed widely.

"Tonight was already going to be a good night, but Astrid and I have just found out some news that has made my birthday even more special." Hiccup looked at Astrid affectionately, causing her to blush. "I'm pleased to announce that Astrid and I are going to be parents before the year is out. Very soon, Berk will have a new heir," Hiccup announced proudly.

The effect was immediate. Claps, cheers and whistles erupted throughout the Great Hall and before long, everyone was coming up to slap Hiccup on the back and hug Astrid, all while giving their heartfelt congratulations.

"Congratulations, you're going to be wonderful parents!"

"Good on ye, lad, lass!"

"Never knew you had it in ya, Hiccup!" Tuffnut sniggered as he approached with the others.

"Tuff!"

"See?" Gobber said with a grin as he clapped Hiccup on the back in congratulations. "I told ya you'd find out soon enough, didn't

I?"

"No thanks to you," Hiccup said in irritation. "You made me think that Astrid was really ill!"

"Kept it a surprise though, didn't I?" Gobber grinned, which made Astrid snort.

"I guess that's...one specific thing," Hiccup mumbled, before he smiled and wrapped his arm around Astrid's shoulders and pressing his lips against her blonde locks. Astrid smiled and laid her head on Hiccup's shoulder in content.

Gobber beamed at the two of them, before he suddenly raised his arms to get everyone's attention. "I propose a toast!" he exclaimed loudly, "to Hiccup and Astrid, and their news. Everyone grab a mug!"

"Except me of course," Astrid said with a laugh as she grabbed a mug of water. "Something tells me I won't be having another drink for a \_long\_ time..."

\* \* \*

><p>"And did you?" Siri asked as her parents finished relaying their story.<p>

"Did I what?" Astrid asked in confusion.

"Not drink again for a long time," Siri said with a grin.

"Oh. No I didn't. You were almost 6 months old before I touched a mug of mead again, so by then, it had been almost a year," Astrid replied. "Lucky for me, considering how much everyone else drunk by the end of that night. Your father and I were one of the only ones still sober by the end of the night. And your Grandmother."

"Uncle Gobber?" Siri guessed with a giggle.

"Uncle Gobber," Astrid confirmed. "Although everyone joined in on their own this time."

"I wasn't going through that again," Hiccup shuddered.

Siri frowned as she thought of something. "How did Uncle Gobber know mummy was pregnant?" she asked curiously. "He's never been married."

Hiccup and Astrid laughed. "No, but he was around your Grandmother enough when she was expecting me to know the signs," Hiccup said with a laugh. "Apparently she gave my dad and him a lot of trouble with her food cravings. Gobber never forgot it."

Siri roared with laughter, before looking up at her daddy. "Did you really think mummy was sick before she told you the news?"

"I was petrified, baby," Hiccup admitted with a shudder. "I really thought your mummy was ill, but when she told me, I didn't care that everyone had kept it from me." He smiled proudly at his daughter as she crawled onto his lap. "You were the best surprise I could have

ever asked for. Especially on my birthday." Wrapping his arms around his daughter's waist, he kissed the top of her head gently. "Then again, you always did have good timing," he said with a chuckle.

"We found out about you on daddy's birthday, and then you decided to arrive 2 weeks early on the anniversary of the Red Death's defeat," Astrid said with a beam.

"Which also happened to be two weeks after our wedding anniversary as well," Hiccup said in astonishment. "You had the most amazing timing."

"Except for her timing to get here of course," Astrid said with a grin at her little girl, giving her a quick tickle making her shriek with laughter. "You kept us waiting once I went into labour, Seer. Over 12 hours from mid morning until nearly midnight."

Siri grinned sheepishly. "Sorry, mummy," she grinned.

Astrid smiled softly. "You were worth it, baby, don't worry." Siri smiled happily and laid her head on her mother's shoulder.

"But that's also the reason why it took so long for us to name you," Hiccup chimed in. "Your mother was exhausted by the time you arrived, she was in no state to think of a name."

'I always wondered why it took until the next day for my name," Siri confessed. Then she grinned. "I know we've been talking all day, but can I have one more story?" she asked with an innocent grin.

Hiccup and Astrid groaned, resulting in laughter from the 8 year old. "Let me guess," Hiccup said. "You want to hear about your birth?" Siri nodded with a grin.

"Alright, but this is the\_ last\_ story, alright?" Astrid said firmly, and Siri nodded.

Hiccup shook his head with a laugh. "You're lucky we love you, baby," he said as he tickled her sides, making her squeal again, before she gave him a cheeky grin once more.

"I know you do, daddy," she said cheekily before she gave him a kiss on the cheek.

Hiccup looked at Astrid with an amused grin. "She takes after you."

"And I taught her well," she replied humorously, before turning her attention back to her kids, one of which was no longer paying attention and was playing with Toothless on the floor, and Siri looked up at her parents in anticipation. "Where do you want me to start, Seer?" she asked the 8 year old.

Siri shrugged with a smile. "You choose, mummy."

"Alright then, the start of the day it is. Now..."

\* \* \*

><p><em>So, there you go, that is how Astrid found out she was

pregnant :) I hope it was ok, and that I'm not as rusty as I think I am! But I'm glad to be back. I have a new respect for the teaching profession considering how busy I was on internship where I was at school from 8am until almost 5pm and then went home and did more work until bedtime. Hardest job in the world! <em>

\_Next chapter will be the final flashback chapter when Siri is born, then I'm moving onto a plotline I've been working on for months. A 3 or 4 parter that will be heavy in emotions, and not the family stuff you're all used too, but after that, it will start to move on quickly with the ages and all. Bare in mind, that from now on, my updates will be fairly random due to how busy I still am, but I will update as often as I can. \_

\_Alright, as always \*\*DON'T FORGOT TO REVIEW! It's been so long and it would be nice to see my regulars review again :) I missed you all! Once again, sorry if I'm a bit rusty. I'll get better the more I get back into writing, I'm sure. Just remember, as usual, that NO FLAMES will be tolerated, but constructive criticism is fine as long as it's KIND. \*\*\_

\_Thanks for reading! :D I'll update as soon as I can.\_

## 25. Chapter 25: Early Arrival

\_I bet you didn't expect to see another chapter up so soon! Neither did I to be honest lol, but I suddenly got an idea on how to write this chapter on Wednesday and within 3 days, I'd written it all!

—

\_Ok, so this is the final flashback chapter showing about Siri's birth. Some of the stuff in this chapter is not actually told to Siri and is only for our benefit, but I like it better than my last chapter which I was really rusty on. I still am a bit rusty after 12 weeks of not writing, but I'm getting better again. I hope. Now this chapter of course does mention and details some birth elements, but it's not enough to gross anyone out, so no worries. I tried to make sure it was not similar to the chapter about Leif's birth, but it there some similarities, I apologise. \_

\_By the way, thankyou so much to everyone who reviewed and welcomed me back earlier this week. It meant the world to me :) I am so grateful to have so many readers. For the one reviewer asking me about Siri's teenage years, yes I will get up to that age, but there's other stories to be told yet. I go year by year, and it will eventually reach her teenage years, but her younger years need to be told yet. Trust me, there's some interesting stuff planned for her teenage years though, I promise :) \_

\_Anyway, on with the chapter.\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 25 " Early Arrival<span>

\* \* \*

><p>"Astrid."<p>

Astrid stirred, but didn't open her eyes. She was too comfortable. And for a woman who was almost 9 months pregnant, that was quite an accomplishment. Nope, she wasn't moving for anything. Not even her husband's voice.

"Astrid, wake up, sweetie."

Groaning loudly, Astrid begrudgingly opened her eyes, heaving a great sigh as she did so. What was so urgent that Hiccup had to wake her up? Adjusting her eyes to the brightness in the room, she squinted and craned her neck to look out the window above her. The sun was already high in the sky indicating it was later than the young woman had perceived. Looking back at Hiccup, he instantly answered the question that was clearly showing on her face.

"It's mid- morning," he explained apologetically. "Just after 9, to be exact," he added. He sighed as he saw his wife groan and bury her face in one hand. "I didn't want to wake you up, but well...considering what happened last week..."

Astrid removed her hand from her face and shot her husband a death glare from where she was. "Don't you dare start laughing again," she warned him in irritation, as she saw Hiccup's lip quiver with a laugh bubbling to the surface. "It's not my fault I'm too big to get out of bed on my own!"

"No," Hiccup admitted as he started to laugh, "but it was funny coming home at lunchtime to see my poor wife literally unable to get out of bed!" Seeing Astrid blush in embarrassment, Hiccup stopped laughing and sat on the bed beside her, placing an arm around her shoulders. "Come on, Astrid, I was only kidding," he said softly as he held her close to him. "I know it's not your fault, it's just the way of it" Giving her a kiss on her temple, Hiccup suddenly grinned again. "No matter how funny it looked," he added, earning him a snort and a punch to the gut, winding him slightly.

"Of course it was funny to you; you're not the one who was stuck here for hours, waiting for you to come home!" Astrid exclaimed in annoyance.

"Which is why I've been making sure you're up before I leave, Astrid," Hiccup said tenderly, before he sighed looking at the bags under his wife's eyes. "Although today I wish I could leave you in bed. You look so tired," he noted sympathetically.

"You would be too if you couldn't get in a comfortable position," Astrid replied with a groan as Hiccup gently helped her out of the bed. "Plus Petrine explained it will happen once it's near my time." Finally upright, the young woman then set about getting her clothes together, before slowly putting them on. As she finished, she turned to Hiccup with a smile. "Well, I don't know about you, but I'm starving," she grinned, all trace of annoyance gone.

Hiccup chuckled before giving her a swift kiss on the cheek. "I've already made breakfast, milady. It was one of the reasons I woke you up," he said with a beam.

Astrid smiled at him. "You're the best, babe."

"Yes, I believe I've been told that."



Astrid raised her eyebrows with a laugh. "Don't push it," she grinned, before she quickly wrapped her arms around Hiccup's neck and giving him a swift kiss on the lips, before waddling down the stairs, Hiccup and Toothless following her. Getting straight into the food, Astrid sighed as she began to eat.

"This is one thing I won't miss," she said. "How much food I've been eating."

"Oh, I don't know," Hiccup said as he sat down beside her. "I've rather enjoyed seeing Snotlout being beaten by you when it comes to food. It's shut him up a bit."

"Are you sure that's not Anna?" Astrid said with a giggle.

Hiccup nodded with a laugh. "True."

Astrid laughed again, only to stop short midway through with a sharp intake of breath. Lowering her hand to stomach, she held it there for a moment, but as quickly as it came on, it vanished. Breathing out again, she looked up again to see Hiccup gazing back at her with a look of worry crossing his face.

"Astrid, that wasn't a contraction, was it?" he asked nervously.

"No, no," Astrid assured him quickly, taking her hand away from her stomach. "It was just a twinge. Petrine said I'd be getting them a lot more often around now, it's nothing." Feeling no pain in her stomach at all now, she smiled at her husband. "See, it's gone. Don't worry."

Hiccup wasn't so sure. "Didn't Petrine also say contractions come in waves, as well?" He stood up. "Maybe I should get her, just in case."

Astrid rolled her eyes. "Hiccup, sit down," she said calmly, as she reached out to take his hand. "It was just a twinge; I've been having them for days. It's nothing to worry about-"

"What!" Hiccup burst out, as he looked down at her in a panic. "You've been having these pains for days, and you didn't tell me? Why?"

"Because I knew you'd react like this," Astrid admitted impatiently. "Seriously, babe, stop being so overprotective. Are you going to be like this next time as well?"

"What...What do you mean next time?" Hiccup spluttered in shock, his arms flailing in confusion. "We haven't even got our first baby yet, why are we talking about the second?!"

"Oooo-kay, I think I may have walked into this conversation at the wrong time."

Looking around to the threshold of the open door, Hiccup and Astrid saw Valka standing in the doorway with an amused look upon her face at the conversation she has just overheard.

"I was just saying that I hope Hiccup isn't as protective next time as he is now," Astrid explained as he looked over at Hiccup who was still spluttering away. "He's worrying over every single twinge I get," she added with an accusatory look towards him.

Understanding her son's spluttering now, Valka howled with laughter as she went over to her still shocked son and put a hand on his shoulder. "She's joking, son," she assured him with a grin. "She's just saying she hopes you won't be as protective the next time round, not that she wants another babe now."

"That's the last thing on my mind."

"Thank gods," Hiccup responded weakly, causing Toothless to rumble with laughter at his rider. Hiccup turned to his dragon with a frown. "Thanks for the support, bud."

"I think even he could see it was a joke, dear," Valka teased him, before she looked at Astrid with a smile. "But it's only natural for Hiccup to be worried for you too, lass. He is a first time dad, as much as you're a first time mum."

"See, I told you!" Hiccup responded with a nod to his mother's comment.

Astrid rolled her eyes, but gave him a small smile; before she suddenly winced as another twinge hit her belly once more. Clutching her stomach, she breathed deeply as the pain passed as quickly as it came. Looking up at Hiccup and Valka, she noticed Hiccup's eyes were wide with alarm again, but she quickly smiled at him.

"Still nothing, babe. It was just a quick painful twinge is all. It will probably happen more often from now on."

"Astrid's right, Hiccup," Valka chimed in thoughtfully, as she took note of the rapid pace of the twinge. "It's too quick to be anything serious-"

Astrid suddenly doubled over once more; her eyes clenched shut in pain. Breathing heavily, she suddenly grabbed hold of the table to steady herself as a sharp pain ripped through her stomach. This time it didn't go away as quickly.

"Of course, I could be wrong," Valka said quickly, as she rushed over to the young woman. "It has been 22 years for me."

Clenching her teeth in pain, Astrid looked up at Hiccup and Valka's pale faces. "It's like something is clutching my insides with an iron grip," she panted, before her eyes suddenly widened in panic. "Oh gods, it's time isn't it?" she asked the older woman nervously, who bit her lip with a simple nod.

"Looks like it, dear," Valka confirmed.

"But," Hiccup said anxiously, his face pale, "it's too early. She's not due for another few weeks."

"It's nothing to worry about, son," Valka said calmly as Astrid looked up in alarm at Hiccup's words. "It's only a few weeks, it's nothing." Valka looked at Hiccup with a smile. "You were over a month

early, Hiccup, so trust me: 2 weeks will make no difference. I'll go get Petrine and Ansfrida. Hiccup, you take Astrid upstairs and get her comfortable. I'll be back later."

As Valka went to head for the door, Hiccup quickly raced after her and placed a hand on her shoulder gently. "Mum, you don't have to leave. Surely Astrid wouldn't mind you being in with her" he insisted.

Valka smiled and reached up to cup Hiccup's cheek. "She won't want her mother in law in there, son," she said. "No, it's better if it's just her mother in there with her, as well as you and Petrine. I'll stay close by, though, I promise." Kissing her son's forehead gently with a smile, which Hiccup returned, she quickly looked over her shoulder at Astrid who was sitting down, very calmly. "Good luck, dear. May Freyja watch over you. You'll do just fine. I'll send Petrine along soon."

"Thanks, Val," Astrid said appreciatively as Valka gave her and Hiccup one last encouraging smile, before quickly turning to Toothless, who was watching Astrid worriedly from the middle of the room. "Toothless, why don't you come with me?" she suggested quickly as she hovered in the doorway. "You don't want to be here for this I assure you."

Looking at his rider, back to the dragon woman, Toothless was torn over whether to leave or not. Seeing his uncertainty, Hiccup walked over and stroked Toothless's head with a smile. "Just go with mum, bud, I'm sure you won't want to be for this."

"You'll just worry, Toothless. Go and wait with the other dragons," Astrid added in.

Knowing they were right, Toothless gave them both a gentle nudge of good luck, before turning and following Valka out the door, who had already gone ahead to retrieve Petrine and Ansfrida. Stopping at the door, Toothless gave them both a gummy smile before walking out, just as Astrid winced with another contraction.

"Oh gods, it's really happening isn't it?" Hiccup said nervously as he wrapped his arm around Astrid's shoulders. "Let's...Let's just go upstairs. Or do you want to stay down here?"

"Hiccup, do me a favour and stop fussing over me!" Astrid snapped. Hiccup stopped babbling in surprise at the outburst. "You're not the one having the baby!" Taking note of the hurt expression upon Hiccup's face, Astrid's eyes widened as guilt clenched at her stomach. Well, she hopes it was guilt and not another contraction, anyway.

"I'm sorry," she said quietly as she clutched Hiccup's hand in hers as they made their way up the stairs. "I didn't mean to snap at you, babe...I just didn't realise it was going to be this painful..." she said, and Hiccup's eyes widened in surprise. Knowing what he was thinking, she gave a short laugh. "Well, I knew it was going to be painful, just not how much."

"It's alright, Astrid. I'm not helping, I know," Hiccup admitted as he finally got Astrid into their bedroom and he helped her lay on the bed, just another contraction came on. Eyes squeezed shut in pain;

Hiccup reached out and took hold of her hand and using his other hand, stroked her hair back gently.

"It'll pass, Astrid, it'll pass," Hiccup reassured her quietly. Breathing deeply, Astrid finally managed to open her eyes and she smiled gratefully at Hiccup, just as they heard their front door suddenly open from downstairs.

"Astrid?!"

"We're up here, Petrine!" Hiccup called back, before hearing footsteps on the stairs and within a few moments the excited faces of Petrine and Ansfrida appeared in the room, along with Petrine's birthing equipment in a saddle bag over her shoulder.

"Well, looks like it's really time then," Ansfrida said elatedly as she went over to her daughter on the bed, wrapping an arm around her shoulders. "So, how're you feeling, sweetie?"

"Other than almost biting Hiccup's head off and feeling as if someone is squeezing my insides, I'm fine," Astrid replied sarcastically, as she held her stomach protectively.

Ansfrida and Petrine burst into fits of laughter at the remark resulting in a smile forming on the young woman's face as she herself tried not to laugh.

"Well that's labour for you lass," Petrine said with a chuckle, as she set about checking Astrid's progress. "It's not meant to be fun."

"I'm learning that," Astrid said with a wince as another pain suddenly shot through her abdomen once more. Groaning in pain, Astrid reached for her husband's hand which he obliged too, gripping her hand tightly as the contraction continued. Seizing the moment to check the young woman's progress, Hiccup watched nervously as Petrine nodded and made a small observations before sitting back up at the conclusion of the latest contraction.

"Just like any first time mother, you're going along quite well," she said with a smile. "Something tells me your twinges may have been the beginnings of labour these past few days."

"What?" Hiccup exclaimed incredulously, as he gave a shocked look towards his wife. "How could she be in labour for a few days and not know it?"

"She doesn't mean full stage labour, Hiccup," Ansfrida explained gently to her son in law, from her spot on the bed. "Just the starting of it, and they can last for days."

"Believe me, I would have known if I was in labour for days, Hiccup," Astrid said with a grin. "Those pains are pretty hard to ignore."

Hiccup chuckled lightly before giving her a soft kiss on the cheek making Astrid smile. Squeezing his hand tightly, she looked at him seriously.

"You're staying with me, aren't you?" she asked him. "You're not

going to wait outside?"

Hiccup looked towards the midwife who was sitting on the edge of the bed. "Do I have to leave?" he asked worriedly. "I know some midwives don't like men being in the room, that's all."

Astrid looked at Petrine fearfully as Hiccup asked this. There was no way she was doing this without him! Thankfully, Petrine gave the young man a small smile and she shook her head.

"Of course not," she said. "I have no issues with a man being in the delivery room, Hiccup. Actually, I prefer it." Seeing Hiccup's look of confusion though, Petrine chuckled. "I like the men to see what their wife goes through to give him his child," she explained with a smile. "Plus, he gives a comfort that only a husband can bring. So no, I won't make you leave."

"Good, because I wouldn't let him anyway," Astrid said stubbornly as she gripped Hiccup's hand tightly. "I wasn't doing this without him," to which Hiccup smiled widely as he brought Astrid's hand up to his lips and kissed it tenderly making Astrid giggle, just in time for another contraction to strike. Groaning in pain, Astrid gripped Hiccup's hand for dear life as the pain increased, before gradually fading again. After checking her progress, Petrine looked up at the young couple with a sympathetic smile.

"Sorry to tell you this, lass, but this is only the beginning," she said calmly. "It's very early stages still and you're barely 2 centimetres dilated. It'll be hours before anything happens."

Falling back onto her pillows with a groan, Astrid looked at Petrine with a calm expression. "Something tells me it's going to be a \_long\_ day."

\* \* \*

><p>Petrine had been right. Hours later and there had yet to be any major headway at all. By midafternoon, Astrid had endured contraction after contraction, all the while, gripping Hiccup's hand so tightly, he was worried it was going to break as Astrid began to scream her lungs out.<p>

"HOW IN THE NAME OF THOR CAN THIS HURT SO MUCH?!" Astrid was screaming as another contraction engulfed her. Breathing heavily, she gripped Hiccup's hand tighter making it turn a worrying shade of purple. Wincing in pain himself, Hiccup kept his mouth shut as Astrid's contraction decreased and her grip on his hand loosened. Breathing a sigh of relief himself, he shook his head just trying to get the feeling back.

"You're halfway there, dear," Petrine announced cheerfully. "Things will start progressing much faster now, I promise."

Astrid groaned. "Well, they can't progress any slower," she said, before another contraction suddenly came on, causing her to bolt upright and bit her lip hard in an effort to not let out a scream, not having expected it. "I take it back," she said through gritted teeth, "slower is fine."

Ansfrida stroked her daughter's hair back gently with a compassionate smile. "It has to be speed up for the baby to start moving along, dear. No matter how much it hurts."

"Tell me about it," Astrid moaned as she breathed deeply, waiting for the latest contraction to pass. "Who would have thought this tiny thing could hurt \_so damn much\_" she said tiredly, as she slumped back onto the pillows, the contraction having passed.

"Think about it, sweetie. At the end of this we will have our beautiful baby," Hiccup said in encouragement from his spot on the bed. "You're doing so well." Caressing Astrid's cheek gently, she suddenly looked up and gave him a glare that could almost rival the gods themselves.

"WELL, IM GLAD YOU THINK SO! I'M GOING TO BLOODY KILL YOU WHEN THIS IS OVER!"

Taken aback, Hiccup quickly looked at Ansfrida, who gave him a kind smile. "She doesn't mean it, Hiccup," she said gently. "It's the pain talking. All mothers get like this, trust me."

"OH YEAH?" Astrid interrupted as Hiccup went to respond. "WELL MY PAIN IS TELLING ME THAT I'M NOT GOING TO LET HICCUP DO THIS TO ME AGAIN!"

Hiccup looked at the two older women weakly as they tried to stifle their laughter. "I don't know about you two," he said, "but I have a feeling I'm going to be in a world a pain after this myself" causing both women to roar with laughter.

"Hiccup, I've seen hundreds of women threaten their husbands," Petrine said calmly. "But not one has ever gone through with it yet."

"Well there's a first time for everything isn't there?" Astrid asked innocently, making Hiccup gulp and chuckle nervously.

"Um, Astrid, I'm not sure if you've noticed, but I happen to need that part of my body...for several different reasons."

Astrid laughed, before sitting up and kissing his cheek. "I know, babe," she winked.

Hiccup sighed in relief that there was a lull in contractions for now. Smiling lovingly at her, Hiccup lay beside his wife on the bed, before wrapping his arm around her shoulders to which she responded to laying her head on his shoulder. Kissing her blonde locks falling freely past her shoulders, Hiccup smiled again. "So" he said slowly. "What are you hoping it will be, milady?" he asked her.

Astrid looked up at him, confusion etched in her features causing Hiccup to chuckle. "I mean, are you hoping for a boy or a girl?" he explained softly, as he caressed her cheek gently. "Or haven't you thought about it?"

As a look of understanding replaced confusion, Astrid looked thoughtful before she gave a small smile. "To be honest, I don't mind either way," she admitted, before she let out a sigh. "But considering how stubborn they are being in arriving, I'm guessing

it's a boy," she joked causing Hiccup to snort and grin at her.

"If we're talking about the baby being stubborn, it's obviously a girl," Hiccup countered.

Now it was Astrid's turn to laugh, but as she did, another contraction suddenly engulfed her, causing her to scream, all efforts to hold it back being in vain. Holding her tightly, Hiccup gently stroked her hair back trying to calm her down as the contraction consumed her.

"Breathe it out, sweetheart," she could hear her mother saying. "That's the best way."

"It will be over in a moment," Hiccup added as he held her close to himself, in his best efforts to comfort her.

"I'LL GIVE YOU A BLOODY MOMENT!" she yelled angrily as she pushed Hiccup off her, causing him to sigh. It had been nice while it lasted, but he couldn't blame her for what she was going through, not when he was struggling himself to keep his feelings of anxiety and fear as to what was happening himself.

"You're about 7 centimetres, Astrid," Petrine said as she checked her progress. "It's really moving now. Your baby has finally decided it \_does \_want to join the world after all."

As she went to sigh in relief though, Petrine gave her a sheepish grin before adding, "but it's still going to be awhile, I'm afraid."

Awhile turned out to be 6 hours. After headway had finally been made that afternoon, the progress had once again stalled just on nightfall. Having been in labour for more than 12 hours, Astrid was exhausted. With contractions coming on every minute now, as soon as the young woman began to almost drift off, another contraction washed over her causing her to scream or just breathe heavily.

"You're almost there, Astrid," Petrine reassured the exhausted young woman. "You're 9 centimetres and I can see something happening."

"Thank gods," Astrid replied sleepily. "I just want my baby in my arms."

"You're almost there, sweetie. Just a little while longer, then you can sleep as well," said Ansfrida gently.

"I'm just guessing the baby is as stubborn as its mother," Hiccup said with a smile.

"All babies are stubborn, lad, not just this one, I assure you," Petrine said, just as Astrid moaned again.

"Ohhh, here comes another one," Astrid said, gritting her teeth in pain, before she suddenly sat up, her eyes widening.

"What is it?" Hiccup asked her nervously, his hands started to shake with nerves. Astrid looked at Hiccup with an uncertain expression, before turning to the midwife.

"I think I feel something," she said. Wincing, she groaned and gripped Hiccup's hand tightly. "Oh, I feel something alright. Petrine, is the baby-?"

"-Coming?" the midwife finished for her. She beamed in excitement. "Oh yes, it is. You're 10 centimetres, dear and the head is already starting to crown. They've decided they've had enough and they're coming fast!" Looking up at Astrid, her face suddenly turned serious. "Alright, Astrid, I know you're tired, but I want you to summon any bit of strength left in you and give me one big push for me. Can you do that?"

Astrid nodded as she sat up. As she gripped Hiccup's hand, she looked at him into his excited face and smiled at him. "This is it," she quickly said before she braced herself as the urge to push suddenly overwhelmed her. Taking a shaky, nervous breath, she bore down with a scream, pushing as hard as she could.

"That's it, Astrid!" Petrine said quickly as she checked her progress. "I can see the head, Astrid and I can tell you now, they have a great mop of hair on them already. Take a deep breath and push again."

Taking a deep breath, Astrid gripped Hiccup's hand and she bore down again. Squeezing her eyes shut, she kept going until Petrine told her to stop.

"It's coming, Astrid, its coming. Give me another one just like that. You and Hiccup will be parents in a few short moments." Beaming widely, Hiccup suddenly closed his eyes and muttered a quick prayer to the Gods as Astrid gave another great push.

"It's nearly done, almost there. One more Astrid and it'll be all over!"

Overcome with a last burst of energy, Astrid bore down, almost crushing Hiccup's hand in the process, screaming loudly, and after a few moments, she suddenly felt the pressure leave her and at last, the sound everyone wanted to hear. The baby's cry pierced the air and the room was soon echoing with its loud cries the only sound in the room.

"IT'S A GIRL!" Petrine cried excitedly as she held the newborn baby in her arms.

"A girl," Hiccup breathed slowly, before a wide grin formed on his face as he turned to his exhausted, but proud wife. "Astrid, we have a little girl!" he exclaimed in excitement, all Chiefly dignity vanishing with his ecstatic goofy grin upon his face.

"Let me see her," Astrid demanded of the midwife, holding out her arms for the tiny wrapped bundle in the midwife's arms.

Unfazed and use to new mother's demands to see their newborn children, Petrine simply smiled widely, before gently placing the newborn in her mother's arms. Looking down at her baby girl for the first time, tears began to form in Astrid's eyes as she gently pulled the blanket back of her daughter's face to see a small mop of golden blonde hair on her tiny head.



Beside her, she heard Hiccup sniff loudly as he reached out to hold the tiny girl's hand. Tears flowing down his face unchecked, Hiccup suddenly beamed at Astrid. "She looks like you," he said proudly as he reached up to touch her cheek with his other hand. "She's so beautiful."

"And she's ours," Astrid said emotionally as tears began to spill out of her own eyes onto her cheeks. "She's our baby girl, Hiccup." Bending down to kiss the baby girl's cheek, the new parents both gazed upon the face that was their newborn daughter. She had a small mop of blonde hair in the precise shade of her mother's, with eyes as blue as the ocean. Her cheeks were a bright pink and given that she was 2 weeks early, was very tiny, but healthy, with her screams from earlier indicating a strong set of lungs.

"She looks like you when you were born, dear," Ansfrida said in awe of her new granddaughter. "She's such a pretty little thing."

Astrid smiled as she stroked the little girl's tiny hand. "She's beautiful," she said happily, as she stroked the little girl's cheek lovingly, before looking up at Hiccup who was rubbing at the tears in his own eyes. "She's perfect, isn't she?" she asked him tearfully.

"She's amazing, Astrid," Hiccup said proudly as he cupped Astrid's cheek with his hand. "And you did so well. I have never been more proud of you as I have been today." Blushing red, Astrid gazed into Hiccup's eyes lovingly as she sniffed again. "I love you," Hiccup choked out as he leant his forehead on Astrid's.

"I love you too," she replied, her voice wavering as Hiccup suddenly captured her lips to his in a loving kiss. Closing her eyes, Astrid willingly responded, kissing him back with as much passion as he was giving, all the while not loosening her grip on her newborn daughter. A feeling of euphoria overtook the young parents as they held each other, unable to believe that it wasn't just them anyway, but the 3 of them. This little girl would be a part of their lives from here on in, and it filled them a happiness that made them feel like floating. Breaking off the kiss, the couple smiled at each other, before Hiccup reached up and wiped a tear from Astrid's cheek as the baby in between them started to whimper.

"Oh, I think she may need her first feed, dear," Petrine explained as Astrid looked at her with uncertainty. "I'll show you the best way, not to worry, but I think we may have something else to deal with first" she quickly said as she noticed the third stage of labour beginning to make itself known. After a few moments, Petrine quickly removed the last remnants of the birth and took it away, before coming back to give Astrid a check over. After a few minutes, she straightened up and gave them a smile.

"All clear. Despite a long birth, there's no damage or anything wrong what so ever," she said to the sighs of relief to Hiccup and Astrid. "You'll be sore for a few days, lass" she explained to Astrid, "but, you're just fine. You'll be all good to get up and about by tomorrow morning."

"Thank you, Petrine," she said gratefully. "For everything."

"It's my job, dear, but you're welcome," the midwife replied, with a wave of her hand. "Now, after she has had a feed, try to get some rest. It's been a long day."

"No arguments here," Astrid said sleepily as she looked back down at her baby girl with a loving smile as she fed happily.

"I bet you don't want to go through that again, am I right?" Hiccup asked her with a grin, his anxiety lifting now that it was all over.

"What?" Astrid asked quickly, looking up at Hiccup with a look of confusion on her face. "I never said I wouldn't go through it again, babe. I'll do it all again in a heartbeat, no matter how painful." Looking back down at her baby girl, Hiccup looked at Petrine in bewilderment, given at how many threats she'd given him over the past 12 hours. Seeing the young man's look, both her and Ansfrida laughed.

"Go with it, Hiccup. It's a mother thing," Ansfrida said with a chuckle.

Shaking his head in disbelief, Hiccup chose to accept that before kissing Astrid's cheek, then his daughter's with a smile. Looking up at Hiccup happily, she took his hand tightly with an apologetic look on her face.

"I'm sorry for everything I said to you today, babe," she said with a sheepish grin. "You know I didn't mean it, don't you?"

Hiccup grinned back at her as he reached up to stroke her blonde hair back before kissing her temple softly, making her sigh in contentment. "I know you didn't mean, milady. Even if you did, I highly doubt you would have gone through with it."

Astrid laughed before looking back down at her now sleeping baby girl. "You know I meant it by the way?" she said as she looked back at Hiccup. "She was worth every pain she gave me when I saw her face for the first time." She kissed her little girl's cheek, before yawning widely, exhaustion suddenly washing over her like a wave.

"I'll let you two rest, now," Petrine said, as she got up, along with Ansfrida. "We'll stay the night to make sure everything's alright, but we'll leave you two alone. Get some rest now, Astrid while she's asleep."

Astrid nodded as Petrine left the room, before her mother walked over to her and gave her a kiss on the cheek. "Congratulations, sweetie, I'm so proud of you. We'll just be in the next room if you need us."

"Thanks mum," Astrid said gratefully as she hugged her mother tightly. "For being here."

"My job as a mum, Astrid," she replied with a grin, before she gave Hiccup a hug too. "You get some rest too, lad. You'll be needing it as well, trust me. Valka and Toothless can wait until tomorrow to see her, alright?"

"Thanks Ansfrida," Hiccup said with a smile. "And don't worry, I'm sure mum will be fine, but be warned about Toothless. He might sneak in."

Ansfrida chuckled. "I'll make sure he doesn't" she said before she too walked out of the room.

Watching her mother leave, Astrid suddenly looked back at Hiccup, beaming, before shifting the slumbering little girl in her arms. "I think it's time for you to hold her, daddy."

Hiccup's face lit up as Astrid gently passed the baby girl over to him. Taking her gently in his hands, Hiccup's heart swelled as he looked into the face of his precious baby girl, sleeping peacefully away in his arms. Smiling widely, he took her tiny hand within his own before giving a gentle kiss to her forehead. "I can't believe I'm a dad" Hiccup said in amazement. "She's so amazing."

Astrid smiled as her eyelids began to droop, the day's events having finally caught up with her. "And you'll be an amazing, dad, Hiccup," she said quietly sleepily.

Not noticing his wife's exhaustion, Hiccup smiled, not taking his eyes off the baby girl. "Well, there's one thing that still needs to be done, milady," Hiccup said with a joyful smile. "We need to name her. Do you have any ideas?" Silence. "Astrid?"

Finally looking up from his baby girl, Hiccup saw that Astrid was fast asleep beside him, curled up in a ball, her hair falling down her shoulders. She looked exhausted. Chuckling slightly, Hiccup bent down to give her a tender kiss on the cheek.

"I guess that can wait until tomorrow."

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><p>Giggling as her parent's final story ended, Siri looked up at her parents with a smile. "So how long did it take you to name me the next day?" she asked knowingly with a grin.<p>

Hiccup and Astrid chuckled. "All morning," Hiccup admitted. "It took us until after lunch when we both agreed on a name."

"What names did you go through?" the 8 year old asked curiously. "I know Kelda was one name you thought of."

"I suggested that," Astrid said with a chuckle. "But daddy didn't like it. Actually he hated it."

"I didn't hate it," Hiccup replied. "I just didn't think it suited her is all." Looking at Astrid with a teasing grin, he suddenly remembered another name she had suggested. "Neither did the awful name of Sigfrid suit her."

"Sigfrid?" Siri asked in disgust, her nose wrinkling. "That sounds like a boy's name! Who wanted to call me that?"

Hiccup roared with laughter as Astrid suddenly turned a bright shade of crimson. Turning to her, he struggled to speak through his laughter. "See?" he said laughing, "I...I said that...that sounded

like a boy's name! I knew I was right!"

"Eww, mummy!"

"What?" Astrid said in embarrassment. "It's a strong name! Despite how awful it sounds."

"Not awful, mummy, terrible," Siri said as Hiccup roared with laughter again, wrapping his arms around his daughter's small frame.

"Oh, that's my girl," he said with a grin as he kissed her hair softly. "I knew that name was awful. It's lucky we didn't choose it."

"Alright, stop rubbing it in," Astrid said with a smile. "She got a nice name at least. If we hadn't come up with Siri, it would have been Ingrid anyway."

"Ingrid?" Siri asked, her eyes widening in surprise. "I like that one."

"Maybe you can use it if you ever have a daughter," Astrid said with a smile at her daughter, causing the little girl to giggle at the look of horror on her father's face.

"Which won't be for a long time if I have anything to say about!" Hiccup exclaimed quickly, "A \_very \_long time."

"I won't leave you for a long time, daddy, I promise," Siri said sweetly, causing Hiccup to smile and kiss her cheek.

"I know, baby, I know," he said tenderly, before he turned to Astrid with a grin. "Well, considering someone here has had us talking all day, we might as well figure out something to do for the rest of the-" Hiccup looked out the window, "afternoon."

"We could have another story?" Siri suggested with a teasing grin.

"Don't you even think about it, young lady," Hiccup joked as he stood up and stretched his legs. "My throat is sore from all the talking as it is."

"Besides, I think Leif is getting bored just sitting here," Astrid said as she stooped to pick up her 2 year old son from the floor, before patting Toothless's head. "Maybe we should take him outside for a while?"

"Owside," Leif agreed happily as he wrapped his arms around his mother's neck causing her to smile and kiss his cheek gently. Suddenly remembering something, Astrid suddenly laughed causing Hiccup and Siri to look at her in bewilderment.

"Sorry," she said with a chuckle. "I just thought about why we were so desperate for Siri to be named, remember?" she asked Hiccup who groaned and laughed. Looking down at his daughter's confused expression, he grinned.

"We were worried that Gobber may have tried to name you, despite his

ceremony ban," Hiccup explained. "And I don't want to know what he may have named you."

Siri grinned thoughtfully. "I do," she said with a laugh. "I might ask him."

Just as Hiccup was about to respond to that, they suddenly heard voices outside the front door. Frowning slightly, Astrid looked at Hiccup with an uncertain expression.

"Are you expecting anyone?"

As he went to answer, the front door suddenly flung open and Gobber, Valka, Snotlout, Anna, Tuff, Annika, Fishlegs and Ruffnut, who was 6 months pregnant now with her second child as well as the kids, suddenly came in wearing identical grins on their faces.

"Happy anniversary, Hiccup and Astrid!"

"What is this?" Hiccup asked with a sudden grin appearing on his face, but he soon got the answer when he heard his daughter's snort from beside him. Looking down at his daughter, he saw she was trying to look as innocent as possible, but her smile gave her away.

"Let me guess?" Hiccup asked with his arms folded, pretending to be annoyed. "My precious little girl had something to do with this?"

"Yep," Gobber grinned widely. "Said you deserve a party for 10 years of marriage, and we obliged."

"Of course you did," Astrid said with a roll of her eyes, but she smiled as she set Leif back down on the floor so as he could play with 2 year Kelda who had rushed over to him as soon as she saw him.

"Does this mean that you were stalling us, Seer?" Hiccup asked with mock hurt. "Is that why you wanted us to tell you those stories?"

"No, I wanted too, daddy," Siri said sincerely as she gave her parents a hug. "That's why I asked for them today."

"You are the cheekiest little girl I've ever known," Hiccup said proudly as he hugged her tightly. "Thank you, baby."

"You're welcome," she replied cheerfully, as she went off to play with Lennart, causing her parents to shake their heads.

"Should have known she was up to something," Astrid chuckled. "But she's right; I guess we did need a party for 10 years." She looked at Hiccup with a smile before wrapping her arms around him tightly.

"So what was it about the stories Siri wanted to hear off you?" Valka asked with interest. "Is that what you've been doing all day?"

"Siri wanted to know about how we became engaged, and it went on to our wedding, the reception, her birth and all that," Hiccup explained as he looked back at his daughter who gave out a giggle. "And she wanted to know \_everything."\_"

Gobber and the other laughed. "That must have taken awhile."

"All day until you arrived," Astrid confirmed. "We were just talking about Siri's birth when you arrived."

"Argh well, it must have been nice remembering it all," Gobber said.

Hiccup and Astrid looked at each other in surprise. "It was nice," Hiccup admitted happily. "It's been a nice 10 years now that I think about. Happy anniversary, sweetheart."

Astrid smiled. "Happy anniversary, babe," she said lovingly before she met his lips in a gentle kiss.

"Happy anniversary!" everyone else echoed as Hiccup and Astrid broke off the kiss with a loving smile to each other.

Hearing her parents saying about the last story they had told her, Siri suddenly remembered what it was that she wanted to ask Gobber and she quickly got up and rushed over to him.

"Uncle Gobber!" Siri said quickly.

"Yeah, Seer?"

"Mummy and daddy said they wanted to name me quickly because they were afraid of you naming me. What would you have named me if you had?" the young girl asked curiously.

Gobber raised his eyebrows. "I couldn't name you, though," he said. "Your Grandfather banned me from doing anything like that again."

"Not that that's stopped you before, Gobber," Valka said with a sigh.

Gobber nodded. "True," he grinned.

"So," Siri tried again with a curious expression. "What would you have named me if you had tried it?"

Curious themselves now, Hiccup and Astrid both listened intently as to what the older Viking had to say. Grinning widely, Gobber looked down at the curious young girl.

"Why, Sigfrid of course," he exclaimed cheerfully.

Siri blanched, and Hiccup suddenly groaned loudly, resulting in a roar of laughter from his wife beside him.

"Oh you've got to be kidding me!"

\* \* \*

><p><em>So, there you go, the final flashback chapter. For anyone wondering about the thing I have with the name Sigfrid, it's more an in joke because that was originally the name that I was using for Leif in the early planning stages of this story when I found out it

was actually a girls name. A awful one at that too. So now I make fun of it. Lucky for me, that Leif is a nicer name for him anyway :p I hope you all liked it. I still feel a bit rusty is all.<em>

\_Alright, the next chapter was going to be a 3 or 4 parter that is going to be very emotional. I am still writing that and looking forward to it, but after writing these flashback chapters for ages, I'm now going to be a short family chapter based on Hiccup taking 3 year old Leif fishing for the first time. Let's just say that Leif soon shows how similar to his father he really is lol :p \_

\_Alright, at the moment I'm not sure when the next chapter will be posted. As of Tuesday I go back to school for my final week of internship, then I have my final and huge university assignment before a teaching interview with the Department of Education for my official approval as a teacher. Because I'm so busy, my next chapter may not be up until next month, but at least it will be a whole new storyline :)\_

\_Anyway, once again, \*\*DON'T FORGOT TO REVIEW! I only received 10 reviews the other day which was a little surprising, but still very highly appreciated. Then I realised I posted at the wrong time of the week, so no worries! Which is why I've posted this on the weekend :) DON'T FORGET, THAT NO FLAMES are tolerated, but constructive criticism is fine, as long as it's KIND. THANKYOU TO MY REGULAR REVIEWERS FOR WELCOMING ME BACK THE OTHER DAY. IT WAS GREAT TO SEE YOUR REVIEWS! \*\*\_

\_Thanks for reading! :D\_

## 26. Chapter 26: Fishing Trip

\_Hey guys! I am so sorry that it's been over a month since my last update. Again. I've just been so busy with my last university assignment (which I passed), my personal suitability interview for being a teacher (which went alright, but could have better if my interviewer had let me finish a sentence when answering and not jumped in to prompt me all the time, but other than that, it wasn't a total disaster lol) AND I've been putting together casual resources and sending out casual resumes to local schools to get some work. Bottom line, I've BEEN VERY BUSY! \_

\_Anyway, this chapter is finally done and it is about Hiccup taking Leif fishing for the first time , along with Siri and Leif's inquisitive nature drives them nuts lol! At this point in time Siri is a month and a half off turning 9 and Leif has just turned 3. \_

\_I can say too that I really enjoyed writing this chapter and I hope it shows :) I have to start being more confident when I posit don't I? :p Hopefully now that things are settling down, I should be able to post regularly again at least once a fortnight. Thank gods.\_

\_Enjoy the chapter!\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 26 â€" Fishing Trip<span>

\* \* \*

><p>"Hiccup, you've got to be kidding!?"<p>

"What? What's so bad about wanting to take my son fishing?"

"Well, for one, he's 3 years old."

"Your point being...?"

Astrid sighed in frustration as she glanced towards the little boy in question. Lying on a blanket in the middle of the room, Leif was curled up in a ball taking a nap, his Monstrous Nightmare doll, affectionately called Smoky, held tight in his grip, his auburn hair spread messily over his sleeping face. With a warm smile at her sleeping son's form, Astrid turned her attention back to her determined husband.

"Hiccup, look at him," Astrid said gently, brandishing a hand towards the toddler's sleeping form. "He gets tired from just running around the \_house \_all day, let alone out in the woods fishing. He's \_three.\_"

Hiccup smiled and gave a slight shrug. "So? I took Seer fishing for the first time at his age," he said with a grin towards his daughter, reading a book on the couch. "She loved it."

"Still do, daddy," the girl replied with a smile from behind her book.

Astrid sighed again as she folded up the laundry she'd been doing when Hiccup came in. Looking at Hiccup with a frustrated glance, she tried to reason with him. "Hiccup, it's not about Leif not liking it," she explained. She looked at Leif, biting her lip in thought. "It's just...well...you do know how much he's like you, don't you?"

Hiccup cocked in his head in confusion at his wife. "What does that have to do anything?" he asked perplexed.

Astrid rolled her eyes. "Try everything," she said. "He's not like how Siri was at this age. He's curious, and clumsier than you on a patch of ice. I mean, he falls over his own toys and then gets into everything he shouldn't."

"It's the curious threes, sweetie," Hiccup said gently with a quick glance at his daughter. "You remember what Siri got up to at that age."

Astrid did and she shuddered at she remembered the axe incident Siri had gotten into 6 years before, but she quickly shook her head as she pushed the memory away.

"It's not just the curious threes, Hiccup," Astrid said as she shared a glance with Siri who bit her lip to stop an escaping giggle. "You aren't with him at all hours of the day like I am. You don't know what he can be like at his worst."

"I know what he's like," Hiccup protested with a chuckle. "He gets



into and tries everything he sees. It's not like he's a troublemaker."

Astrid snorted. "No he's not, but he's so hard to keep up with. I wouldn't want to be fishing with him with just you, he's likely to-

"-go for a swim to see the fish?" suggested Siri quickly as she got up off the couch to join her parents. "I took him to see Uncle Gobber the other day at the shop and within a few minutes he was into his stuff and almost fell into a dragon's mouth that he was fixing a tooth in." The 8 year old shuddered. "I don't want to imagine him fishing."

Hiccup gave his girls a reassured smile. "Look, I know how much Leif has of me in him, but surely he'd love to get out and do something like this? He doesn't leave the village very often."

"Well, no," Astrid confessed as she put down the laundry she'd been doing. "But why do you want to take him now?"

"Everyone takes their kids fishing for the first time at 3," Hiccup said with a frown. "I took Siri on her 3rd birthday and dad took me at that age too."

"Yeah and look how that turned out," Astrid said with a chuckle as she passed the laundry to Siri to take upstairs. "You went off looking for trolls and eventually he stopped taking you."

Hiccup gave a sad smile at the memory of his limited father-son fishing trips, before giving his wife a pleading look. "Come on Astrid, I know Leif is curious, but let me take him for the night," he said hopefully as he wrapped an around her shoulders. "The council have told me to take a few days off and I want to spend it with the kids. Siri can come along with us so he doesn't get in trouble too much."

Hiccup and Astrid heard the rushing footsteps on their daughter on the balcony above them and looked up in time to see her excited face peering down at them.

"Please mum, can I go?" she begged with her eyes alight with excitement. "Daddy hasn't had time to take me in ages. I'll help with Leif, I promise!"

Looking at her daughter's hopeful expression to her husband's pleading one; Astrid emitted a loud sigh and shook her head in annoyance before smiling.

"Well, if it means I get the house to myself for the night, alright you can take Leif along-

"YES!"

"But..."

"Awww"

"Only if you're all careful," Astrid interjected worriedly as she looked at her husband and kids. "I know what you're all like together

and I don't want one of you to come back saying the other is injured."

"Give us a bit of faith, milady," Hiccup said with a grin as Siri came rushing down the stairs in whirl of colour, engulfing him in a hug and then her mother. "We'll be careful, won't we, Seer?" Hiccup added as he grinned at his daughter who smiled reassuringly at her mother.

"We'll be safe, mummy, I promise," she said with a smile. "Even with daddy and Leif's clumsiness."

"Thanks, baby."

"Anytime, dad."

Astrid snorted with laughter before giving Hiccup a peck on the cheek. "Alright, I have complete faith in you babe," she said with a warm smile. "Just don't go off exploring for days on end or get injured trying to show off like you did last fishing trip." Astrid turned to Leif, now awake on the floor. "And keep an eye on our little wanderer over there, too" she added.

Wrapping an arm around Astrid's waist, Hiccup pulled her towards him, meeting her lips in a passionate kiss, turning her red. "He'll be fine, Astrid," he said gently. "I promise."

Astrid smiled warmly at him. "Alright, I believe you, just be careful is all I ask or I'm coming to all your fishing trips from now on."

"Why won't you come this time?" Hiccup asked hopefully.

Astrid gave him a grin. "So I have the house to myself for the night, why else?"

Hiccup snorted. "Thanks sweetheart, I feel the love." Emitting a grin though, Hiccup turned his attention to his 3 year old son on the floor. "Hey, Leif, guess what?" he said cheerfully as he picked his son up off the floor.

"What, daddy?" Leif said in excitement as he looked up into his daddy's face.

"You, Siri and me are going fishing tomorrow," Hiccup said with a smile. "Just like Kelda did a few months ago when Ludovik was born."

Leif's eyes lit up and he turned to his sister with an excited expression. "You help me catch a big fishy?" he asked Siri happily.

"Sure I will, Leify," she promised with a grin. "So will Toothless and Midnight. They always beat us."

"Yay!" Leif grinned as he looked down at Toothless and Midnight curled up asleep on the floor. Noticing they weren't paying attention to anyone, the little boy looked back up at his father. "When we going, daddy?" he asked with a grin.

Hiccup smiled. "Tomorrow morning, buddy," he said with a smile. "Which \_means,"\_Hiccup stressed with a teasing grin at the 3 year old, "you have to have an early night, and so does your sister. We'll be leaving early."

"Awwww," droned Siri and Leif in unison.

"They're all yours, babe," Astrid said with a sly grin at her husband as he emitted an exasperated sigh before he turned to her.

"Is it too late to back out?"

\* \* \*

><p>Despite the kid's initial complaints about the early start the day before, the next morning went more smoothly than Hiccup could have hoped for. No sooner than Hiccup had shaken his daughter awake, she was downstairs, fully dressed, albeit appearing rather drowsy. Leif was awake, but he too, was drifting in and out of sleep in his mother's arms before they left.<p>

"At least they're awake," Astrid chuckled as Siri and Leif both yawned widely. Over at the door, Hiccup too emitted a great yawn as he attached the last of the equipment to Toothless's saddle bag, who was the only one in the small household that was fully awake at this point.

"They'll wake up more once they get there," Hiccup said with a yawn. "Siri usually gets straight into it and is beating me to the fish within an hour."

"It's not so hard, daddy," Siri said sleepily from the table where she was resting her head in one hand. "You aren't very good at it" she said with a quiet giggle.

"Hey!" her father protested with mock hurt. "Do you enjoy teasing me, baby?" He looked at Siri who was trying not to laugh. "Don't answer that," he said quickly as she went to answer. "I know you do."

Astrid snorted with laughter with a shake of her head. Siri may love teasing her daddy, but both she and Hiccup knew she never meant any of it.

"Well, you better get going if you two want to start beating each other," Astrid chuckled as she gently passed a drowsy Leif over to his father. "And \_please,\_" she stressed as she looked towards her husband, "keep an eye on our little wanderer here," she said with an anxious expression. "I don't want him to find out the dangers of being too inquisitive."

"We'll be fine, Astrid," Hiccup reassured her gently as he kissed her forehead warmly. "We'll be home tomorrow afternoon."

"Alright," Astrid relented as she stroked her sons auburn locks back, giving him a kiss on his temple. "You be a good boy for daddy now, sweetie. You promise?"

"I pwomise, mummy," the little boy replied with a smile, before Siri quickly ran up to her mother and enveloped her in a hug.

"I'll look after Leif and daddy, mummy," she promised seriously.

Astrid laughed before she pressed a kiss into her daughter's blonde locks. "I know you will, baby. Have fun."

"I will!" Siri said with an excited grin as she and Midnight ran outside to wait, now fully awake which was more to say for Hiccup and Leif who were still yawning widely as Hiccup gave Astrid a swift kiss on the lips.

"Love you, we'll be home tomorrow," Hiccup said with a loving smile before he rushed out after his energetic little girl. Astrid followed him out as he got up on Toothless and settled Leif in front of him and Siri held on tightly from behind him.

"Good luck, babe. Be careful," Astrid said as Valka came up the hill behind Toothless all of a sudden, eyebrows drawn together in confusion.

"Where are they going so early?" she asked.

"We're going fishing, mum. We'll be home tomorrow," Hiccup quickly replied before Astrid could answer. "Let's go, bud," he said to Toothless who happily took off, glad to be away from the village for a day or so.

As Valka and Astrid watched them disappear into a tiny dot in the sky, Valka suddenly turned her attention to her daughter in law, eyebrows raised.

"You did tell him how Leif can get, didn't you?" she asked.

"Yep."

"Let me guess, he didn't listen?"

"Nope."

Valka sighed. "Thor help him. He's going to need it by the end of the day."

Astrid looked at her mother in law with an amused smile. "It's not my problem, I did warn him," she grinned. "Now it's up to Leif to show his daddy how much he's really like him." She suddenly grinned mischievously towards Valka.

"How long do you think Hiccup will last?"

"Astrid!" Valka exclaimed with a shocked laugh, before she frowned thoughtfully. She grinned. "End of the day?"

Astrid smiled wryly. "I say tomorrow," she said. "But only out of stubbornness," she added seeing Valka's amused expression.

Valka laughed. "We'll see," she said with a grin.

\* \* \*

><p>"Here we are," Hiccup said as he landed Toothless in a little clearing. "As soon as we set up, you can get started on catching more fish than me, sweetie." He turned to his daughter as she slid off Toothless's back with a large yawn and gave her a grin which she returned as she collected her satchel from the dragon's side.<p>

"I might catch more than you daddy, but Toothless always beats \_me,\_"  
the 8 year old replied with a giggle. She turned her attention to the Night Fury with a grin. "You and Midnight beat me and daddy put together last time!"

"And regretted it too," Hiccup said sternly at the dragon who was eager to begin his all he can eat fishing bouquet. "You remember how sick the two of you got last time," Hiccup said with a frown at his friend. "Go easy this time."

Toothless gave what looked like a shudder to the two Vikings as he too remembered the last fishing trip before he stalked off to the river to observe the fish, followed closely by Midnight who was careful to keep a safe distance from the Night Fury. After 4 years, the two of them till only tolerated each other.

Seeing the two dragons going over to the water, Leif looked up at his father hopefully. "Daddy, can we fish too?" he asked eagerly.

Hiccup smiled down at his son as he sat on the grass. "In a minute, buddy, I promise. We just have to set up here, then we'll join them."

Leif pouted. "But I wanna fish!" he exclaimed crossly as he folded his arms in a huff, resulting in a giggle from his sister, which quickly vanished after a look from her father.

"You can't fish with your bare hands now, can you, Leif?" Hiccup asked him patiently as he showed the 3 year old a fishing line he was trying to make up. Looking at the line his father was holding, Leif's eyes widened in understanding and he shook his head.

"No, daddy."

"Once daddy's finished, Leifey," Siri interjected quickly, as she sat on the grass next to her brother, "he'll help you cast your line" Siri demonstrated this with a wave of her hands, "and then a fishy will bite" she used her hands to demonstrate a fish, "and you yank him in!" she finished dramatically with a grin at her brothers wide eyes.

"Then we eat him?" he asked Siri curiously.

Siri laughed. "Yeah, then we eat him," she agreed with a giggle, before turning her attention to the two dragons, stalking the water's edge. "Or they will," she added with a finger in their direction.

"Naughty dragons!"

"More greedy than naughty," Siri replied with an amused smile as she watched Toothless snatch a fish up from Midnight and eat it without a second thought. She shook her head. "\_Very \_greedy."

"Alright, I've got yours all set up, Seer," her father said as he held out the line to her. "You can start beating me to the fish."

"Yes!"

Getting to her feet, she quickly rushed over to her father and took the line from him with a swift hug before joining the dragons. Shaking his head at her excitement, Hiccup then turned his attention to Leif, still sitting in the grass nearby, watching a few ants on the ground next to him.

"Leif, do you want me to show you how to fish?" he asked.

Looking up from the ants, Leif nodded excitedly and ran over to his father, reaching up to take the line from line, which Hiccup quickly took back from him.

"I'll show you, okay?" Sitting on the ground, Hiccup quickly placed Leif on his lap and placed the line in the toddler's hands. Gently manoeuvring his arm back, he helped him spring the line forward and into the river, the fly landing in the water with a loud plop, ripples going in every direction. Leif frowned at the still motion of his rod.

"Where the fishy?" he asked impatiently as he sat up on his father's lap to look into the water.

"It will come, buddy," Hiccup assured him gently. "You have to wait for them."

Leif frowned. "That boring," he said.

As Hiccup chuckled and went to respond, a cheer suddenly erupted from beside them.

"I got one, daddy, I got one!" Siri screamed excitedly as she yanked hard and reeled the decently sized fish snagged on her line out of the water and onto the bank, gasping for air as it lay on the grass.

"Good job, Seer!" Hiccup exclaimed proudly as he gently lifted Leif off his lap and onto the grass to grab the line. Taking the fish off the line, he handed it to Siri.

"You can look after the fish. You remember how to recast?"

Siri nodded with a beam and went off to tend to the fish, as Hiccup turned back to Leif, who in the small amount of time his father was distracted, had decided waiting for a fish wasn't good enough. He had dropped his line onto the ground and was sitting beside the water, dangling his head over the edge to see into the flowing river.

"LEIF!" Hiccup yelled anxiously as he quickly ran over to the young boy and grabbed him away from the edge, with protest.

"I wanna see a fishy!" he exclaimed loudly as he tried to see into the water, only to be stopped by his father's firm grasp around his

waist.

"You are not seeing the fishies," Hiccup said sternly as he placed the boy back in his lap. "You will wait for one like your sister did, alright?"

Leif mumbled, but nodded as his father gave him back his line. For a few minutes, it was quiet as they waited for another bite, the only sounds that were around them being the two dragons splashing and re-emerging nearby with fish in their mouths. Then Leif felt a tug on his line and his eyes widened like saucers.

"Fishy, daddy, fishy!"

"Good job, buddy!" Hiccup exclaimed proudly as he quickly placed his hand over Leif's in an effort to help with the burden. A few moments later, the line flew out of the water with a sudden swishing motion, before a small fish plopped onto the shore beside the two of them, wriggling around as it made contact with the springy grass.

"I got a fish!" Leif screamed in excitement as he went to pick the wriggly fish up, but his father's hand quickly came out to stop him. Looking up at his daddy in confusion, Hiccup gave him a quick smile.

"You have to get the fly out of its mouth first, buddy," Hiccup explained quickly, as he picked up the fish and the line. "See that the fly is still caught in his mouth?" He gestured to the line still clamped firmly down its throat. "We have to get it out first so you can try again."

Listening intently, Leif nodded quietly as Hiccup gently manoeuvred the line out of the fish's mouth before placing it in the basket behind them. The fish was only small, but the father couldn't bear to throw back his son's first fish. Turning his attention back to his son, he gave him a cheerful smile.

"Want to try again?" he asked the 3 year old who nodded eagerly.

As Hiccup was fixing the rod to cast again though, he suddenly held a surprised squeak from beside him.

"Um, daddy?"

Quickly turning his attention to his daughter, Hiccup suddenly saw what the fuss was about and he let out a laugh. The fly on Siri's line was caught in her headband and she couldn't move, making for an awkward position. Seeing her father's amused expression, she grinned back at him.

"I missed," she said, stating the obvious with a giggle.

Hiccup laughed as he went over to his daughter, with a quick glance back at his son, before bending down and trying to get the fly free from the headpiece.

"Seems like you caught yourself there, Seer," Hiccup chuckled gently. "I never knew you were a fish!"

"Very funny, daddy," Siri replied dryly, resulting in another chuckle

from her father before he turned to Toothless who was watching the scene with interest. Upon realising what had happened, he gave out a low throat chuckle himself and wandered over to the girl to see how he could help.

"Oh, look out, Seer, looks like Toothless thinks you're a fish now too. Watch out!" Hiccup said teasingly as he finally released the fly from the headband and Toothless sniffed the spot where it had been. Siri giggled and scooted away from the Night Fury as he did so.

"I'm not a fish, Toothless!" Siri squealed loudly with a wide grin. "Go annoy daddy!"

Catching on to the game, Toothless gave the girl a gummy grin before suddenly licking her straight up the face. Siri squealed and covered her face with her arms as she tried to block the licks from the dragon that were going in every direction. Before long, Midnight too had joined in on the fun and Siri was soon scrambling to get away with Leif and Hiccup laughing behind her.

"Eww, Toothless go away!" Siri exclaimed with a laugh, before she looked up at her daddy watching the action as he howled with laughter. "Daddy, help! I'm getting covered with dragon slobber!"

"Alright, bud, stop the dragon attack," Hiccup said quickly with a smile. "Siri doesn't need another outfit ruined."

Stopping the fun straight away, Toothless nuzzled up to the girl gently in apology which Siri responded to with a hug around the dragon's neck before they looked at Hiccup mischievously. His eyes widened as he noticed the looks.

"Oh no, you don't!" he said as he watched the dragon ready to pin him down. "Get Leif instead!" Hiccup looked around to where Leif was; or rather, where he should have been. When Hiccup looked behind him, all he saw was the half made up line, but his son was nowhere in sight. His heart skipped a beat.

"Leif?" he said quickly as he looked round. "LEIF!" he yelled louder. He turned to Siri with a frown. "He was just here wasn't he?" he asked in a panic. "I heard him laughing!"

"So did I," Siri confessed as she looked around. "Leify, where are you?!"

Toothless looked around and quickly took off in search of the young boy. Hiccup quickly took off into the nearby trees, Siri following closely in his wake as they yelled out the little boy's name. Luckily they didn't have to look far, but as they spotted him, Hiccup went pale as he saw what the young boy was doing.

Leif was wandering over to a wild Gronkle fast asleep in a clearing. As he heard his father behind him, he quickly took off towards the slumbering dragon. As he did, Hiccup felt as if an iron ball had formed in the pit of his stomach as he raced after his son.

"Don't you dare go near that dragon, Leif!"

Leif didn't stop and in the next moment, he tripped over a small rock



and fell towards the dragon, which, in all the commotion, had begun to wake up. Seeing the little human, it snarled at him and made a move towards the boy. In an instant, Toothless was between the boy and the Gronkle, snarling loudly as a warning. Instantly recognising authority in the alpha, the wild Gronkle stopped and backed up a few steps, diverting it's eyes from the alpha's glare. Sighing in relief, Hiccup quickly went over to the dragon and pulled out Inferno to calm the dragon down fully while Siri picked up her little brother. After a few minutes, the dragon took off to another spot and Hiccup turned to his son with a worried expression, before taking him in his arms.

"That was very naughty, Leif," Hiccup said sternly as he pulled his son close to him. "Why did you run off?"

Leif looked down at his hands, appearing not to be listening. Hiccup tried again and Leif looked up.

"I wanned to pat the dragon," he said before he frowned. "You do it, daddy" he added, like it was the most obvious answer in the world.

Hiccup sighed in frustration. "Yes I do," he admitted. "But I've been training dragons for years, buddy and I don't just go up to wild dragons and try to pat them!" he said incredulously.

"Sorry, daddy," Leif said as he noticed his father's anxious expression which lightened at his sons apology.

Hiccup sighed. "It's alright, Leif, just don't run off again, okay?"

"Okay."

Frowning at that, Hiccup reluctantly took his son back to the river where his attention was immediately focused on the fish again. Almost immediately, Siri caught another fish which was added to the pile in the basket.

"You know, if you weren't going to be Chief, baby, you'd make a great fisherman, er, woman," Hiccup said with a smile as he watched her recast her line.

Siri grinned. "No thanks, dad. If I did it for a job it wouldn't be very fun." She looked past her father. "LEIF!"

Hiccup wheeled around just in time to see Leif once again bored of his line, back at the water's edge, his hand in the water near a large fish. As he moved forward, he was dangerously close to falling in.

"Leif, get back from there!" Hiccup said in frustration as he pulled his son away from the water's edge again.

Leif huffed as he was pulled away from the water again, but he immediately brightened as he saw a wild Terrible Terror nearby and before Hiccup could blink, he made a beeline straight for it. This time, Siri got in his way.

"Leif, no," she said, her arms folded as she looked down at him.

Looking up at his sister, Leif just gave her a grin before running back to the direction of the water instead, attention focused once again on the fish.

"Oh, \_for Thors sake\_!"

Running over to his son, Hiccup quickly scooped him up and held him tightly in his arms. He looked down at his daughter with a dubious expression. "Is he like this with you and mummy?" he asked.

Siri nodded. "Everyday" she said. "Usually early in the day when he's the most awake. He wants to see and know about \_every\_thing" she drawled. "It gets \_so\_ annoying, but mummy says he takes after you so it's normal."

Hiccup snorted. "If this is what \_I \_was like at this age, than no wonder my father stopped taking me places." He looked down at his son, who was eyeing off a fish jumping out of the water. "How do I miss all this?" he asked, perplexed.

"You're usually on rounds, daddy," Siri said sympathetically as she gave him a small smile. "Leif only does this when he's fully awake, which is in the morning before you come home" she added.

"Your poor mother," Hiccup said quietly as he set Leif down, only for him to run off to the water's edge again, oblivious to his father's earlier warning and outside of his father's attention. "Why do I never listen to her?"

"Because you're stubborn?" his daughter responded with a giggle.

Hiccup raised his eyebrows with a smile. "Oh really?" he asked with a grin. "Well, something tells me \_you've \_been spending too much with your mother."

"How?" she asked with a frown.

"You're starting to remind me of her," he said with a warm smile as he pulled her into a tight hug, before placing a kiss on her blonde locks. "You tease me as much as she does," he added with a chuckle, as he tickled her sides suddenly making her squeal with laughter. Before he could do anything else though, he looked up and blanched at the sight of Leif in the water, with a fish in his hands.

"LEIF!" he yelled out before he ran over to him. Siri groaned and ran after him. Why did her little brother have to be so \_curious\_? And she thought her father was a curious person, but Leif beat him any day!

Siri watched as Hiccup got Leif out of the water, only to try to get back to the fish a few minutes later. After a few attempts at keeping Leif out of the water, he finally charged Toothless, who begrudgingly stopped his own fishing, to keep a close eye on the little boy while he helped Siri with her fishing. Leif kept looking into the water, determined to watch the fish swim in the river, but was held back by the dragon.

"Remind me to wait until he's older to bring him again, sweetie," Hiccup said with a weary sigh as he fixed up her line again later on.

"All he wants to do is \_study\_ the fish, not catch them." He looked back at the boy, who was looking around at the trees behind them. Sighing again, Hiccup looked up at the position of the sun. It was low in the sky, but still only mid afternoon. They still had hours before bedtime and Leif had already taken a short nap, so there was to be no breaks. It had been a \_long\_ day.

"He might be like this when he'd older too, dad," Siri pointed out. "You still are."

"I'm not \_that\_ bad!" Hiccup denied with a chuckle. "But I always said Berk could only handle one of me at a time. I wasn't wrong." Siri giggled, but stopped short as she looked past Hiccup's shoulder.

"Don't tell me," Hiccup moaned as he turned his head. Sure enough, Leif was once again peering curiously in the river, but luckily Toothless was stopping on from getting too close. "Not again. What is it about the fish that's so interesting?" he asked, baffled as he watched Leif staring so intently at the swimming fish. "It's not like they do much."

Siri shrugged. "He seems to be interested in whatever we're doing," she said. "If we go to Uncle Gobber's, he wants to know \_how\_ to fix things too." Siri nodded to the little boy's curiosity with the fish. "I think he wants to know why we would catch the fish!" Siri added with a giggle as she watched her daddy take her brother's fish out of his hands before picking him up and placing him near her on the grass. Luckily he seemed bored by then and decided his dragon doll was more interesting. Heaving a sigh of relief, Hiccup collapsed on the ground beside his daughter.

"I love the little mischief maker, but Odin, he is a handful!" Hiccup said as he closed his eyes with a sigh. "I mean, I knew he was already," Hiccup said as reopened his eyes and glanced at his daughter, "but I never realised how much!"

"Mummy warned you," Siri said with a grin, making her father groan.

"And your mother has more sense than me," Hiccup admitted with a chuckle. "It's why she runs the household and not me; \_and\_ does some of \_my\_ duties too." Hiccup chuckled. "Then again she is competitive, so sometimes I think she does it all to prove she can."

Siri snorted at that comment, which made her father's eyes widen with amusement. "What are you laughing at?" he asked her with a grin. "It was you who was determined to beat Toothless today, wasn't it? Or was that some other little girl that wants to prove Vikings are the better fishers, being the perfectionist she is?"

Siri blushed, making Hiccup grin at her as he pulled her gently to him, giving her a swift kiss into her blonde locks. "Well, in any case," Hiccup said as he got up off the ground with a groan, "it's getting late, so it's time to put a hold on the competition until tomorrow. Understood?"

Siri nodded. "Yes, daddy," she said as she pulled the line out of the water and gave it to her father who wound it up and placed it in the basket beside them. After he was done, he went over to a sleepy

looking Leif and lifted him up off the waving grass, and held him tightly in his arms. A small wind had started in the light afternoon, and by this time of the day the rhythmic zephyr in the grass had put the young Viking in a doze. After a day of getting his father on his toes, the 3 year olds' eyes were slowly drooping as the sun sank behind the trees and out of sight for the day.

"Oh, sure, now you're tired," Hiccup said with a chuckle at the drowsy toddler held firmly in his arms. "You couldn't have done this earlier?" Shaking his head, he gently sat back down in order to get some of the cooked fish into his stomach before he fell asleep. Next to him, Siri was yawning widely in between bites of her fish, and on his other side, even Toothless and Midnight were looking as if they were ready to collapse.

"Alright, early night it is," Hiccup said as he took note of all this. "We'll fish a bit more tomorrow and then head home in the afternoon." He looked down at Leif, now fast asleep in his arms and he smiled warmly at his son, and stroked the messy auburn hair back off his slumbering face. "As long as somebody decides to behave himself."

Beside him, in the dim light of the firelight, he heard the faint laugh of his daughter beside him, before she replied. "Like that's going to happen, daddy," before she drifted into slumber.

\* \* \*

><p>"Why do you always have to be right, sweetie?"<p>

Siri smiled apologetically at her father as he pulled her inquisitive brother from the river for what felt like the thousandth time that day. Having slept all night without as much as a twitch, the 3 year old had woken next morning not only fully rested, but also full of energy, making it impossible to keep him from the fish.

Hiccup sighed as he placed the little boy next to Toothless who glared at him in frustration before he sat down heavily on the water's edge. "I just wish he'd focus all that energy he has by actually fishing," Hiccup said as watched as Siri pulled in another fish, then back at Leif who had decided the fish weren't worth it anymore and was playing catch dragon with Toothless. Toothless easily outpaced the chubby legged 3 year old, who fell over every few minutes as he chased the Night Fury around the trees. Hiccup watched his son with a warm smile spreading across his face.

"Well, at least if he studies the fish, he might know more than us eventually. What do you think, Seer?" Hiccup asked his daughter.

"With all the time he's spent with the fish, I thought he would now," Siri giggled as she watched him and Toothless play. "I think he'll be smarter than you when he's grown up, daddy."

"Wouldn't surprise me," Hiccup agreed with a chuckle. "Runs in the family that the next generation tries to be smarter than the previous one; or so dad said anyway."

As Siri went to laugh at her father's comment, she and Hiccup suddenly heard a loud high pitch yell from behind them and both of

them whipped their heads around to see Leif back in the water. He was standing in the water by the bank, with Toothless hovering over him, twisting and turning around like there was something in his pants. As Hiccup approached the young boy though, he noticed that was \_exactly \_the problem. From where he was standing, Hiccup could just see a tail protruding from the little boys pants where a fish was obviously taking refuge and Leif was not happy about this visitor one bit.

"Daddy!" he yelled in panic as he jiggled around to release the fish. "There's a fishy in my pants!" Face turning red with fright, he screamed as he tried to dislodge the fish. "Daddy!"

Not able to contain himself, Hiccup suddenly found himself roaring with laughter at the sight of the wriggling fish in his son's pants, earning him a scowl from the little boy in return. Beside him, Siri's face was going red as she hid her laughter behind her hand, while Toothless was also giving out low pitch laugh.

"Daddy, get the fishy out my pants!"

Controlling his laughter, Hiccup quickly followed his son into the river and quickly scooped his hand into the boys pant leg, freeing the fish, before releasing it back into the river. Leif scowled up at his daddy with a look of annoyance.

"It not funny, daddy!" he protested as he saw the look of amusement on his father's face.

Hiccup chuckled as he scooped the little boy up from the water. "Well, you know what they say, buddy, curiosity killed the dragon," Hiccup chuckled. "That will teach you for annoying the fish now, won't it?"

"Isn't it curiosity killed the cat, daddy?" Siri asked with a frown.

"You see any cats around Berk, baby?" Hiccup grinned.

"Point taken."

Leif gave out a long whine then as he shuffled a bit in his father's arms. "Daddy, my pants are wettttt," he whined as he shifted uncomfortably.

Hiccup sighed. It was true, Leif's pants were soaked through and he had no spares. They'd have to go home early.

"Siri, you don't mind if we go home now, do you?" Hiccup asked her apologetically. She shook her head.

"I've caught enough fish anyway," Siri replied as she bent down to pick up the fishing gear. "I'd just like to know how mummy will react to what's happened!" she added with a giggle.

"You and me both," Hiccup muttered.

\* \* \*

><p>"How do you think they're going?"<p>

Looking up from her sewing, Astrid's eyes met Valka's as she asked the question. Looking at the location of the sun in the sky, Astrid shrugged with a sigh.

"Well, they're due home in a few hours," she said. "So either Leif decided to behave himself or--"

"-or Hiccup is being stubborn," Valka finished for her daughter in law. She chuckled. "That sounds more like it to me."

"You never know," Astrid said slowly as she carefully stitched up one of Siri's skirts. "Leif might have liked fishing and decided to stick with his daddy for once."

"Well we're soon going to find out," said Valka from the window. She turned to Astrid with a grin forming on her face. "There's Hiccup now."

Astrid raised her eyebrows and she looked at the sun again. "They're early," she noted. "I wonder how it went?"

No sooner had Astrid asked that question, the front door creaked open and Astrid watched as the beleaguered party trudged inside. First came Siri, looking as though she had spent 10 rounds in the dragon ring against a Gronckle, followed by a very soggy looking Leif, with Hiccup, Toothless and Midnight bringing up the rear. Hiccup yawned and stretched as he walked through the entrance into the house. Surveying the three, Astrid started to speak before noticing her sopping son. She raised her eyebrows.

"Should I even ask?"

"No, no you shouldn't," Hiccup replied with a groan, but Leif did anyway.

"I had a fishy in my pants," he explained to his mother. "It got my pants wet." He wrinkled his nose. "And it cold."

"And how did you get a fish in your pants, sweetie?" Astrid asked with an amused smile, which Hiccup, despite how tired he was, returned before he explained.

"Leif has been more interested in the fish themselves since we got there, so he spent most of the time not fishing, but studying the fish," Hiccup said dryly. "He got a bit too close to one earlier as you can tell. Hence the unhappy fish, and the wet pants."

Astrid laughed and put out her arms for her son, who happily stretched out for her. Taking him in her arms, she gave her husband a warm smile and a kiss on the cheek, and repeated that with her daughter. "Oh gods, you can't go anywhere can you?" she asked them with a grin, before she looked into her son's emerald green eyes which were wide with annoyance. "The fishy got the better of you then, did it buddy?"

Leif nodded with a huff. "He liked my pants."

Astrid laughed and kissed his forehead gently. "Yes, I think he did, sweetie," she said. "Come on, we'll go and get you out of these wet

pants."

"I'll do that, Astrid," Valka said quickly as she plucked Leif out of her arms with a smile. "Come on, Leif, let's get you dry."

As Valka went upstairs to change Leif's outfit, Astrid turned to her daughter with a smile. "Did you beat Toothless, baby?" she asked.

Siri's eyes lit up. "Yep!" she said cheerfully. "I beat him for the first time."

"That's brilliant, sweetie," Astrid said as she kissed her daughter's messy blonde hair, which had fallen loose from her plait. "Maybe you can challenge me next time instead."

Siri looked at her mother with a cheeky grin. "I would mummy, but I'd win. You can't fish."

"Thanks baby, I feel the love," Astrid replied dryly, before she smiled at the 8 year old. "But if you want to challenge someone, why don't you invite your grandmother next time?" Astrid glanced up to the wash room with a grin forming on her lips where Valka was changing Leif. "She is the best fisher, next to you, after all."

"I'd be happy to challenge you, Seer!" Valka called out from the wash room. "Maybe we could go fishing together sometime."

"I'd love too, Grandma!" Siri called back with a grin, before she emitted a great yawn, and made a move towards the stairs.

"We're you going?" Hiccup asked with a chuckle as he watched her begin to trudge up the stairs, Midnight following behind her with a drowsy look on her little face.

"I'm going for a nap," Siri said with another yawn. "Leif's enough to tire anyone out!" Siri looked down at her little Terrible Terror whose weary face seemed to match her own. "Come on, Midnight," she added as she and the little dragon went in to the room before shutting the door behind them with a soft thud.

Hiccup and Astrid laughed as their daughter went out of sight. "I don't know," Hiccup said with a chuckle. "I think I could follow her lead to be honest." He gave a small smile as he placed a hand on Toothless's nose as he flopped down on the ground. "By the looks of it, so could Toothless."

Astrid smiled apologetically at her husband. "I'm sorry Leif was such a hand full, babe," she said. "But I did warn you."

Hiccup shook his head with a smile as he reached up to cup her cheek. "It's fine, Astrid, I should have known how much of a handful he'd be out there. I knew he was curious, although not that curious," he said incredulously. "He beats me any day!"

"Like father, like son," Astrid smiled as she wrapped her arms around Hiccup's neck. "But seriously, I should have gone with you."

"And take away your night to yourself?" Hiccup asked with mock

horror. "I couldn't do that!" Astrid raised her eyebrows in amusement and Hiccup smiled as he kissed her gently on the lips. "Seriously though, milady," he said softly, "you did deserve the break."

Astrid snorted as she played with the braid at the back of his head. "And instead I set Leif's curiousness upon the poor fish!" she chuckled.

Hiccup shrugged with a grin. "Well, it could have been worse."

"How so?"

"He could have gone hunting for trolls."

\* \* \*

><p><em>There you go, Leif's first (and probably last for awhile) fishing trip. I had so much fun writing it considering his personality, which is more inquisitive than Hiccup any day! Trust me, you're going to love this kid when he's older. He's a mini Hiccup, but with a lot more to his personality. He's not just another Hiccup as you'll see later on!<em>

\_Alright, the next chapter is going to be a three or four parter and one I've been planning ALL YEAR. I'm really excited about it because it's going to be emotional it I get it right and I can finally give you the summary. \_\_\*\*When Hiccup suddenly vanishes without a trace after a chief meeting away, Astrid faces the very real possibility of being a young widow and mother, as well as temporary Chief of Berk, a fact that she can't handle. For several different reasons. \*\*\_\_Now don't freak out! It sounds worse than it is, I promise, and this story has a long way to go before it finishes. A VERY long way, so I promise this isn't some sort of bad ending, just a bump in the road, as you'll soon see. It could be a story on its own if I felt like writing it that way, but I don't, so 3 or 4 parts it is. It begins only a month after this chapter.\_

\_A few notes about this chapter too. The bit Hiccup mentioned about Ludovik is Ruffnut and Fishleg's baby boy, born in the year in the 11 months between these chapters. I couldn't put him in the chapter, but I wanted to mention that they have a new baby. Also, Hiccup hates fishing. He can't stand it. He only takes the kids because it's tradition to take them at 3 and Siri absolutely loves it. I know Hiccup isn't the fishing type and a few of you were probably wondering why he was taking them fishing. And for anyone who doesn't know, all a fishing line or rod was back then was a wooden handle with a line and a fly attached to the end that you had to yank out the water with a bite. Not very easy. I'm not sure if they were used this early in time, but it was pretty close if not.\_

\_Alright, \_\_\*\*DON'T FORGET TO REVIEW! I love seeing everyone's reviews after being away from here for so long so everyone who reviews makes my day. Remember though, I DO NOT tolerate flames, but constructive criticism is accepted\*\*\_\_. I really hope you liked the chapter. I'm still getting back in the groove, so I hope it was good. Apologies for the long author's note too!\_

\_Thanks for reading! :D\_



## 27. Chapter 27: A Storm is Brewing

\_Hey guys! I'm updating on time as I promised and this is the first chapter out of a four partner storyline. It's changed a little bit since I started writing it, but I'm quite happy with it so far. This chapter is just a setup chapter to the plotline and some bits are slower than others, but necessary, while other bits are pretty intense, like the end. You'll see what I mean quite soon! \_

\_For everyone who has been so supportive of my journey to become a teacher, I thought you would all like to know that as of last week, I got an email telling me that I have passed my teacher suitability interview and I am now deemed suitable for permanent employment in public schools within my state :) It's almost summer holidays here, so I won't get any work this year, but next year is a huge beginning for me. Thanks for everyone who supported and understood my long delays in writing because of this, so thanks! \_

\_Alright, so this chapter is only the setup, but there are huge things happening by the end of it that sets up the whole thing. I tried so hard with it, so I really hope it's good. I've looked forward to this for ages, so I hope you all like it! It is most likely very different from what I said it was going to be, but there was only so much I could tell you! Also there may be a few things in the beginning that you may never have imagined Hiccup or Astrid saying, but they are 31 at this point in time and it's just some cheekiness between them, so don't worry if it doesn't really sound like them.\_

\_On with the chapter!\_

\* \* \*

<p><span>Chapter 27 â€" A storm is brewing<span>

\* \* \*

<p>"Hiccup."<p>

Hiccup groaned as his wife's voice broke through his slumber, but not enough for him to open his eyes. Shifting slightly in his sleep, Hiccup buried his head into the pillows in an effort to doze off once more.

"Hiccup," Astrid's voice came again, a little louder this time.

Muttering incomprehensibly, the Viking shifted slightly under the covers, but made no move to acknowledge her. Squeezing his eyes shut, Hiccup found himself slowly drifting back into a state of unconsciousness, but not before he felt a gentle hand on his shoulder. Before he could respond though, his wife's voice suddenly shouted loudly in his ear.

"Oh for god's sake, Hiccup!" she exclaimed loudly. "Get your attractive arse out of bed!"

Hiccup snorted loudly as Astrid's comment broke through his sleepy reverie. Begrudgingly opening his eyes, Hiccup glanced up towards his wife standing beside the bed, with a grin spreading across his

face.

"Oh, flattery is it, milady?" Hiccup asked her with a grin, sitting up to talk to her properly. "Well, I know my arse is attractive, but I never thought you would use it to get me out of bed."

Astrid raised her eyebrows in amusement. "Don't flatter yourself, babe," she said, but she couldn't help a smile spread over her lips. "I needed some way to get you out of bed." She watched as Hiccup sat up with a yawn. "And it worked, didn't it?"

"Yeah, thanks a lot," Hiccup said dryly as he looked out the window where the sun shine filtering through the curtains seemed to mock him. "Now I have to get up."

"You had too anyway," Astrid pointed out with an apologetic smile. "It's your duty to go to this meeting, no matter how much you hate it."

"You're just trying to get rid of me aren't you?" Hiccup asked her with a teasing grin.

Astrid grinned back. "Sure," she replied, "-I loved having the house to myself so much last month that I couldn't wait until this meeting came around." She furrowed her eyes as if deep in thought. "I wonder what I can do without you for the next week?" she added, her tone teasing.

"That hurts, milady," Hiccup said with a teasing pout. "You get to stay home with the kids, while I'm stuck at the Shivering Shores listening to boring speeches all week." He looked up at his wife with an expectant smile. "Sure you don't want to come with me?" he asked hopefully.

"And be bored to death?" she asked with a laugh. "No thanks, babe, I can get that here for free" she said with a laugh, her eyes gleaming.

Hiccup's eyes narrowed. "Oh really?" he asked in amusement. "How so?"

"Oh, I don't know," Astrid said as she brought a hand up to her chin as if thinking. "Maybe it's to do with all the boring discussions you have with me about inventions that I have no idea about...hey!"

Emitting a surprised squeak as Hiccup suddenly pulled her onto the bed beside him, Astrid burst into a fit of giggles as Hiccup playfully pinned her down stopping her from getting up and escaping. Seeing the gleam in Astrid's eyes, Hiccup smiled warmly down at her as he reached forward to cup a hand on her cheek, tracing the bones of her face with his thumb, causing her to flush a bright pink, a smile forming on her lips.

"What are you so happy about?" he asked her with a loving smile as he caressed her flushed cheek. "Anything I should know?"

"You'd be giggling too if your husband was being like this," Astrid answered with a grin as she stroked the hand that was cupping her face. "What do you expect me to be? Annoyed?"

Hiccup laughed. "No," he admitted, "I just thought you looked different is all."

"And you are trying to sweet talk your way out of leaving," Astrid countered with a grin as she looked up at him. "I don't want to be the one explaining to the Chief of the Shivering Shores why you never showed up."

Hiccup sighed. "Fine, you win," he said before moving to let Astrid up. "Why do you have to be so persuasive?"

"Somebody has to be with you," Astrid said as she moved to get up, but not before Hiccup suddenly pulled her down towards him, meeting her lips with his in a soft kiss. Emitting a small squeak in her throat, Astrid quickly relaxed before wrapping her arms around Hiccup's waist, eyes fluttering shut. Holding her close against him, Hiccup reached up to cup her face in his hands with a contented smile forming on his lips as he deepened the kiss tenderly, neither of them in a hurry to break it off and join the real world. After a few minutes, though, it was Hiccup who finally gave a sigh and broke away with a smile on his face at Astrid's blushing face.

"What was that for?" she asked breathlessly as Hiccup enclosed her hands in his own. He grinned.

"Do I have to have a reason to kiss my wife?" he asked her.

"No," Astrid said quietly, her breathing returning to normal. "But you did a bloody good job of letting me stall you!" she added with an accusatory tone.

Hiccup grinned. "That was the idea," he said cheerfully, before he unwillingly let go of her hands and rolled out of bed. As he reached for his clothes on the chair beside him though, they heard a loud rap on the door.

"Daddy, are you awake yet?" Siri's voice came from the hall. "Uncle Gobber said you have to get a move on."

Hiccup groaned as Astrid laughed from behind him, still sitting on the bed. "He's up, Seer," Astrid said loudly in the direction of the door. "He's just been trying to stall is all. He'll be out in a minute."

"Traitor."

"I love you, too," Astrid said, sarcasm seeping through every word. "Now get your butt moving or you're going to be late." Picking up Hiccup's shirt, she threw it towards him with a bit of force, hitting him square in the face. "Besides, the sooner you leave, the quicker you can come home. Right?"

Hiccup groaned. "Right."

\* \* \*

><p>"You remember the council meeting for tomorrow?"<p>

"Yes, Hiccup."

"What about Trader Johan's visit?"

"Yes, babe."

"What about-?"

"Oh for Thor's sake, stop stalling and go already!"

"I'm going, I'm going." Grinning sheepishly, Hiccup tied his satchel to Toothless's saddle before turning back to face his family. "I'll be back in a week, if everything goes well." He turned his attention to Gobber. "Astrid is acting Chief and mum second in charge, make sure everyone knows that."

"Oh they know," Gobber said with a toothy grin. "They'll know not to cross with the women this week." He cast a glance to the 8 year old beside her mother and winked at her. "And that goes for the wee lass as well" making Siri grin proudly.

"Three female Chiefs this week, what did Berk do to deserve this?" Hiccup joked, before a fist came in contact with his arm. He winced. "Ow! I was kidding, Astrid!" He shook his head with a teasing grin. "And to think I was going to come home for our anniversary."

"Oh, and now you're not going to?" Astrid asked as one eyebrow rose in disbelief. Then she grinned. "Too bad," she said, as turned her gaze away from Hiccup teasingly, "I had a surprise for you too." She looked back at Hiccup who was looking back at her, surprise evident in his features. He gave her a smile.

"And can I know what this surprise is?" he asked hopefully as he placed his hands on her arms, looking into Astrid's eyes to try to find anything hidden in those azure depths. Failing to find anything, he gave her a hopeful look which she chuckled at.

"And if I told you, it wouldn't be a surprise, would it?" she responded with a warm smile. "But you'll like it, I promise" she added, her tone surprisingly cryptic.

"I'm sure I will," Hiccup said with a chuckle, not pressing the matter any further. "And if they run overtime, I'll just leave early then."

"You would," Astrid said with a roll of her eyes, before lifting her gaze to the position of the sun. It was still low in the sky, but it was edging closer towards midday than early morning, indicating Hiccup was already late. Following her line of sight, Hiccup gave out an irritated groan, but he turned to his children regardless.

"I'll see you next week, Seer," he said, dropping a kiss into her golden locks. Straightening up, he nodded towards the Vikings in the village. "Try to help mummy with keeping these crazies in line."

Siri's lip quivered as she tried not to laugh. "I will, daddy," she promised. "No one will kill each other on our watch!" She turned her head towards the centre square where Bucket and Mulch were already fighting, despite the early hour. She frowned. "I hope not anyway," she added, aghast.

"Not with you, mum and grandma in charge, trust me," Hiccup said, certainty evident in his tone. He turned to his son, looking at him with a smile that lit up his emerald green eyes as he reached out to his daddy for a hug which Hiccup gladly returned.

Astrid smiled at him as he looked up from this embrace, but before she could say a word, she was suddenly pulled into a gentle kiss. Eyes widening in surprise, the young woman didn't hesitate to respond, and before she knew it, Hiccup had straightened up, whispered a quick 'I love you' and was on Toothless, ready to go before she could barely blink.

"I'll see you next week!" he said with a wave as Toothless cooed happily and took off towards the sky, leaving Astrid blushing and open mouthed as she watched them rapidly flying away from them. Within moments they were nothing, but a speck against the pale blue sky.

Tearing her eyes away from the form of husband and his dragon, Astrid suddenly noticed the giggles emitting from both of her children.

"What are you giggling at?" she asked them with a grin, before she looked back up at the sky. Looking further in the direction that Hiccup had just vanished, though, Astrid suddenly frowned. On the horizon she could see a gathering blackness, great towering storm clouds that, while did not appear to threaten the island, eked out a dire feeling of dread in the pit of her stomach. The rhythmic pounding of the ocean against the nearby cliffs and the soundless flashes in the distance within the clouds did not help to ease her worry, either.

Astrid was snapped back to reality when she heard Gobber speaking beside her.

"...alright, Astrid?"

"What?" she asked startled. Turning her face towards Gobber though, she saw a look of concern cross his features as he saw the anxious look in her eyes.

"I said are you alright, Astrid?" the older Viking asked worriedly. "You look worried, is all."

"The storm clouds," Astrid said quietly, as she nodded in their direction. "They look really nasty."

Gobber turned his attention towards the direction she was looking at. "Eh, not unusual. It is storm season after all," he said with a shrug. "Besides, they're not heading for us" he added with a wave of his hand. "They're headed east, see?" Gobber pointed to the movement of the clouds with a large bony finger. "Hiccup's headed west."

Astrid looked back at the storm clouds, with a slight frown on her face. "I guess so," she admitted. "They're just a lot nastier than the ones we usually get."

"Storm season is going out with a bang most likely," Valka said as

she gave her daughter in law a reassured smile. "Hiccup will be fine, dear," she assured her, patting her shoulder gently. "Our human lightning rod is nowhere near them," she added with a laugh, which Astrid quickly joined in with.

"That's true," she admitted with a grateful smile. "I feel sorry for whoever is getting that though." Astrid watched as the clouds suddenly lit up with a pinkish tinge of light and she shuddered.

"So do I," Valka said as she watched them. "But it's not us, so don't worry about them." She turned her attention back to her daughter in law. "Why don't we go for a walk?" she asked. "Beats standing around here, anyway."

As Astrid opened her mouth to reply though, she started as she heard a loud yell from behind her.

"You're supposed to catch the fish, Bucket, not throw them back in the ocean!"

"But the fish was looking at me so sad, I had to let it go!"

"Of all the stupid things, Bucket, this is the stupidest!"

"I am not stupid!"

Astrid groaned as she turned in the direction of the commotion and watched as Bucket and Mulch continued to fight. In the blink of an eye though, Mulch suddenly got hold of a fish from the barrel beside them and started slapping Bucket over the head with it.

Watching in disbelief, Astrid shook her head. "Do those two even know how to get along?" she exclaimed in exasperation as Leif started to giggle in her arms as he watched the fight. Knowing she couldn't deal with this with a child in her arms, she turned to Valka with a pleading look who chuckled and held out her arms for her grandson.

"I've got him, dear," she said as she took Leif into her arms with a smile. "You just go and deal with the fish slapping." One corner of her mouth quivered as she tried not to laugh at the scene in front of her. "Although it is a lot better than fighting with weapons."

"Those two can turn anything into a weapon," Astrid said in annoyance as she rushed over to stop them. "Alright, alright, that's enough!" she yelled loudly as she approached them, eyes glaring at them in irritation. "Why can't you two find something better to do?" As they opened their mouth to argue, she suddenly held up her hand to them. "Don't answer that" she said quickly, "I know you can't. How about you go and do something \_away \_from each other for the rest of the day?"

Mulch looked at Bucket in annoyance before he gave Astrid a nod. "Sounds good to me," he replied before he turned on his heel and stalked off. Astrid sighed in relief. One problem down.

"That was awesome, mum," Siri said with a grin. She looked after Mulch with a laugh. "He didn't even argue!"

Astrid grinned down at her daughter. "Because he's listening to someone different," she explained. "Why don't you try it on someone this week?"

"No thanks, mummy. I'm not Chief \_yet,\_" the little girl answered with a giggle, which was broken off by a loud yell. Turning in the direction of the Great Hall, both mother and daughter groaned as they saw yet another fight taking place.

"Oh, you've got to be kidding me!" Astrid yelled in annoyance as she strode off towards the Great Hall. As she was walking, she looked down at her daughter she spoke. "Something tells me this is going to be a \_long \_week."

\* \* \*

><p>Astrid sighed in frustration as she flopped down into a seat in the Great Hall. It was the first moment of solitude the Viking warrior had gotten all day, let alone that week. She hadn't been kidding when she said it was going to be a long week. Reaching up to rub her temples, Astrid tried to recall just how many fights she had broken up this week and lost count after a few moments. It seemed like <em>everyone <em>had decided to pick a fight this week, for all matters from a simple fight over a fish like Bucket and Mulch, to domestic disputes. It was enough to drive her insane! How in the name of Thor did Hiccup handle this every day, as well as sit at council meetings and look after other matters around the village? Plus Astrid had the added bonus of looking after two kids and a household in the process. Hiccup could soon keep this job full time, she thought tiredly, as she sat back in the chair with her eyes closed.

"Mum, are you in here?"

"Oh, not again," Astrid groaned as Siri's voice startled the Viking woman out of her thoughts. "What is it this time?!" she called to her daughter, opening her eyes to watch as her daughter turned at the sound of her voice and made her way over.

"Nothing bad, mummy," Siri reassured her with a giggle. She nodded her head towards the open doors. "Trader Johan just arrived."

"Oh," Astrid said as she quickly stood up. "Thank gods. He was supposed to be here a few days ago." She started to walk quickly towards the doors, her daughter running alongside her in an effort to keep up with her mother. "Does he look alright?"

"He looks fine to me," Siri said as she looked down at her feet as she descended the stairs. "He waved to me and told me to come and get you."

"Did he?" Astrid asked, bewildered. "Usually he doesn't ask for anyone as soon as he gets here." She frowned thoughtfully. "He must have something for us."

Siri shrugged as they walked down to the docks where a small crowd of people were already crowded around and on Johan's ship. Hearing more footsteps approach his ship, the trader looked up and he grinned widely as he saw the mother and daughter come down from the village.

"Mistress Astrid!" he exclaimed cheerfully as he raised his arms in greeting. "Lovely to see you again!" He suddenly bent down and picked up a scroll from the floor of his ship. Straightening up, he gave Astrid a beaming smile as he held it up. "I have something for you, courtesy of a certain Berk Chief. He bid me to give this to you."

Astrid raised her eyebrows in surprise. "Why wouldn't he send Sharpshot?" she asked anxiously as she looked down at the letter in her hands. "Why did he send it with you?"

"Well, apparently the poor little fella has overindulged on fish a little too much," Johan explained with a slight chuckle. "The Chief hadn't the heart to send the little guy on a delivery in the state he's in right now." He motioned to his ship with a smile. "It's just lucky that I was at the island at the time he wanted to send the letter, having been delayed on my previous endeavour."

"Poor little thing must be sick then," Astrid said sympathetically. "If Hiccup didn't want to use him."

Johan laughed. "It's more he didn't want the little fella to be sick while on his way. He'll be up flying by the time Hiccup's ready to leave I'm sure. The Chief just wanted to make sure you got the letter."

Astrid smiled gratefully. "Thank you, Johan, I appreciate it," she said with an appreciative smile. Looking at the crowd loitering around the ships hold, she chuckled. "I better leave you to your customers," she said with a nod. "You're welcome to stay as long as you like, Johan."

"I thank you, my dear," he replied with a cheerful smile before turning back to the Vikings crowding in on his deck.

Turning away from the merchant, Astrid quickly unrolled the scroll and scanned her eyes over the parchment, a smile appearing on her face as she did so. At one point, her eyes narrowed with anxiety, but that quickly vanished as another smile appeared on her face, lighting up her eyes once more.

"What does it say?" Siri asked, curiously as she stood on tip toe to see what her father had written as they walked back up to the village. Looking up from the letter, Astrid gave her daughter a small smile, before she read it aloud.

"\_Dear Astrid, Siri and Leif, \_

\_Well, just as I thought, I am bored out of my mind here. Although everything we do is important, I just wish they didn't spend hours talking about one thing. I think I've fallen asleep once or twice. Not that I meant too, of course. \_("Yeah, right" Astrid snorted, resulting in Siri trying to bite back a laugh). \_The good thing though, is that we are on time, and I will definitely be home next week to order to celebrate our anniversary, like usual. That's as long as the storms hold out. I swear the storm season is going out with the biggest bang I've ever seen in my 31 years of life! Last night, we had a storm here that lasted all night, complete with gale force winds, hail, rain and lightning that scared the heck out of everyone when we were outside. (I'm not the only one that's a human



lightning rod here). Hope you haven't been getting them. I know how much Siri hates them. But as long as they hold out I'll be home. There's no way I'm flying in them if I can help it! As Johan would have told you, poor Sharpshot made himself sick with all the fish he gets from the other Chiefs and couldn't fly home to save his life just now. He'll be fine in a few days though, hopefully. Toothless on the other hand, loves all the free fish, but he's not sick at least. I hope everything is going alright at home and that no ones giving you a hard time, but I know you can handle it, milady, you always do. I love you and I promise I will be home soon. Tell the kids I love them too. \_

\_Love, \_

\_Hiccup, Toothless and Sharpshot. \_

Siri looked up at her mother with worry evident in her eyes. "You don't think daddy would be silly enough to fly through a storm just to get home on time?" she asked nervously. She looked out towards the horizon, but no storms were evident that day. "Would he?" she added.

Astrid placed an arm around her daughter's shoulders with a reassured smile towards her. "Your father has done some silly things in his time, sweetie, but he wouldn't fly in a storm on purpose. He knows what it's like to be hit by lightning." As she said this, Astrid couldn't help looking in the same direction as her daughter. "At least I hope not, anyway," she mumbled to herself.

Before they had any more time to think about the letter, their reverie was broken by the sound of dragons roaring. Turning to face the sound, Astrid wasted no time in calmly pushing Siri aside as a fireball whipped past and set alight a house behind them; a Nadder had upset a Gronkle, who was now systematically lighting houses ablaze in a dragon hissy fit.

Astrid sighed. "Here we go again," she said. "Siri, go and get Cloudjumper. They'll listen to him!" she called to her daughter before racing off to put out the fire. Gods, she couldn't wait until Hiccup and Toothless were back, she thought as she approached the situation. One week was more than enough for her!

\* \* \*

><p>"I don't know about you, bud, but I think I'll be glad to get home and deal with fights again, don't you?"<p>

Toothless let out a soft croon of agreement as he watched Hiccup attach his satchel to his saddle side. As much as the Night Fury had loved all the fish the other Chiefs had taken to give him, being the only companion dragon on the island; there was only so much both he and his rider could take being on his island. And listening to everyone talk most of the day about almost anything they could think of was \_not \_one of them. It fact, it was worse than dealing with petty matters back on Berk; or so his friend said.

"Leavin' so soon, lad?"

Hiccup closed his eyes with a slight groan as he heard footsteps behind him, announcing the approach of a couple of other Chiefs that

had been there for the meeting. He had been trying to get away without them noticing. Heaving a great sigh, he turned around to face them with a slight smile.

"Well we are finished," Hiccup answered with a grin. "No point in hanging around is there?"

"Why don't you stay one more night to have a drink with us, Hiccup?" Snorri, chief of a Viking tribe known as the Ironbeards, asked, coming up behind Hiccup with a full of mead in his hand. He grinned as he watched Hiccup getting ready to leave. "Why do you always leave so early anyway?"

"Well, you see..."

"It's because somebody promised to be home for his wedding anniversary," another gruff voice piped up. Hiccup looked up to see Vidar, leader of the small forest island of Skodey, joining their conversation. Seeing Hiccup's eyes on him, the man grinned at him and raised his own mug of mead. "How many years has it been this year, lad? Got to be getting up there in years now, surely?"

Hiccup gave a short laugh and nodded as he tightened up Toothless's saddle. Knowing Vidar was just teasing him, Hiccup answered with an honest grin as he leant on Toothless with one arm.

"11 years in 2 days," Hiccup confirmed with a cheerful smile. "And I've never missed one yet, no matter where I've been."

"A bit devoted there, aren't you lad?" Snorri asked him with a teasing grin. "What, too scared of the wife to miss one?"

"Yeah, sure" Hiccup answered dryly with a roll of his eyes. "And I suppose me loving my wife has nothing to do with it?"

"Eh, we're just joking, lad, don't get your saddle in a knot," Snorri grinned, as he clapped Hiccup on the back. The man winced and twisted his back around in response. "But you do seem very eager to get back this year, lad" Snorri chuckled, as he watched Hiccup get up on his saddle, preparing to leave. "Usually you stay with us to celebrate the end of the meeting."

Hiccup looked up at the two Chiefs with a wide smile. "Astrid has a surprise for me, apparently," he confessed with a warm smile. "And she was very cryptic about it, so I'd love to know what it is." As the two men suddenly looked up at him with mischievous grins, Hiccup found himself blushing from forehead to chin.

"Not that, guys!" Hiccup spluttered as he refused to meet their eyes. "Astrid wouldn't be secretive about that, I assure you!"

Blushing redder as the two men guffawed, Hiccup went to take off to avoid the embarrassment, when they suddenly stopped laughing, waving a hand of apology at the young man.

"Sorry, lad, but you left yourself open for that," Snorri said as he grinned widely.

"Very mature," Hiccup mumbled dryly as his face began to return to normal. "But the thing is if Astrid has a surprise for me, I don't

want to disappoint her by not coming home," Hiccup added with a quick glance towards the direction of Berk. "I hope she's not trying to outdo the presents from last year though. She can be very competitive."

"What Viking isn't?" Vidar snorted, as he took a swing of mead. Lowering it down, the man grinned at Hiccup. "But it sounds like she's gone through some trouble, so I guess you better get home-"

"-before she comes looking for you" Snorri added with a snort. Hiccup chuckled.

"Actually I'd prefer to get going before another storm comes in," Hiccup said as he looked up towards the clear blue sky. "It's nice enough now, but if the one we got the other day is anything to go by..." He trailed off with a look at his leg. "Well," he continued, "let's just say I'd prefer not to be caught in one like \_that\_ on the way home."

"Not when you're a human lightening rod," Snorri agreed with a shudder, as he gazed down at his own metal hook hand, before looking back up at the unblemished sky. "Well it looks alright now, lad, but with the way the storms have been lately, just be careful."

"I'll be fine, the sky looks pretty clear today," Hiccup said with an appreciative nod towards the two older Vikings, before he pointed towards a tiny dark speck on the horizon. "It's a bit dark out there," he noted with a slight frown, "but I don't think it will bother us. If I get caught in anything though, I'll come straight back. Even I'm not stupid enough to fly in a storm."

"We believe you, lad," Vidar said. "Just watch out."

"We will," Hiccup promised, as he checked to see if Sharpshot was comfortable in the satchel, before patting Toothless on the side of his neck who launched into sky without further ado. "I promise!"

\* \* \*

><p><em>BOOM!<em>

\_CRACK!\_

"Mummy!"

"I'm here, baby, I'm here. It's alright."

Astrid had barely turned away from the bedroom window when her daughter suddenly engulfed her in a bone crushing hug around her waist. Outside, thunder clapped overhead like an enormous whip crack and a streak of lightning forked across the sky, lighting up the room in a sudden light. From her waist, Astrid heard her daughter whimper before burying her head into her mother's nightgown.

"Shh, it's alright, Seer, you're safe in here," Astrid soothed her daughter gently, stroking her tangled mass of blonde hair from her petrified face. "The storm is not going to hurt you."

The words had barely escaped the Viking woman's mouth when thunder

exploded from the darkness outside, rattling the window pane and echoing around the room. Not a moment later, lightning flashed purple and hail began crashing on the roof of the wooden house, a faint whistle of wind in the air.

"Really?" Astrid asked in exasperation as she looked up towards the roof. "Right now?" Shaking her head in frustration, she sat down upon the rocking chair in the room, pulling her daughter into her lap. Taking advantage of the closeness, Siri snuggled into her mother as best as she could. Outside thunder growled ominously, sounding closer than the last.

"When will it go away, mummy?" Siri sobbed pitifully. "Make Thor stop it!"

Astrid sighed sympathetically. "I don't think I have that kind of power, sweetie. We just have to wait for it to stop, I'm afraid." Siri moaned and hugged her mother closer.

Astrid smiled sadly at her daughter as she clung onto her. Siri was as brave and adventurous as any other Viking child, and mostly had no fear, but as soon as a storm arrived, she was like a scared little girl, unable to hide her fear. It had never used to be that way. Siri used to love thunderstorms, but spending two days alone and scared in a snowstorm 3 years previously was enough to develop the fear. A fear that ranged from any type of storm, let it be thunder, or snow or wind; and it didn't help that Hiccup wasn't at home, and could possibly have gotten caught up at some point in it on his way home. There was no doubt in Astrid's mind just what was causing this storm to be worse than others.

Looking up as the booms of thunder eased for the moment, Siri looked at her mother helplessly. "Do you think daddy is caught in this?" she asked her mother anxiously, fear clearly evident in her sapphire eyes.

Astrid mentally sighed. Just like she thought; Siri was more afraid than usual because her daddy could be out there.

"Daddy may be silly, sweetie, but even he's not that silly," Astrid said with a reassured smile towards her little girl. "He would never risk himself or Toothless in a storm that big, even to get home on time." Reaching out to the desk behind the rocking chair, Astrid took hold of the letter from Hiccup in her hand and held it front of them. "See?" she said as she pointed to a section of the letter, "he said there's no way he would fly in a storm like this. Even if he did start to come home, I'm sure he would have turned back once it got worse." Both mother and daughter both jumped as thunder cracked outside. "I hope so anyway," Astrid added in undertone as she looked out at the lightning covered sky outside.

"But the storm appeared out of nowhere," Siri insisted anxiously. "How could daddy have turned back?"

"Siri," Astrid said sternly as she looked down at her daughter. "Your father has flown in storms before; he'll know what to do." She sighed as her daughter looked down, twisting her fingers around in her lap. She took hold of her daughter's chin and lifted her head up to give her a warm smile. "Besides, the storm didn't really come out of nowhere, it was just fast moving. Daddy was likely to gone higher

up to avoid it."

As Astrid said this though, she couldn't help but feel a tiny gnaw of anxiety in her stomach. \_What if Hiccup had got caught in it\_? She wondered. Looking outside as the sky lit up a bright purple once more, Astrid shook her head to clear her thoughts. \_No\_, she thought, \_you're letting Siri's fear get to you. Hiccup will be fine. \_Taking a deep breath, the fear was gone as soon as it appeared and in the next moment, Siri also gave her mother a small smile.

"Daddy could still stuck at the Shivering Shores," she suggested with a slight giggle ", or gone back there."

"That'd make his day," Astrid answered with a laugh. "But I'm sure he's fine, baby. He told us he wouldn't fly in this weather and we have to trust him." She kissed the top of her daughter's blonde head. "No matter how silly he can be," she added with a slight groan, resulting in a laugh from the 8 year old in her arms, before they both suddenly jumped the storm outside suddenly roared back to life, a peal of lightning sounding once more.

"How is Leif sleeping through this?" Siri exclaimed incredulously over the noise of the storm. "It sounds like a million dragons in a fight!"

"I hope not," Astrid said with a grin. She looked out to the direction of the hallway. "As for your brother, you know him, he can sleep through anything. Just like your father."

Siri giggled a little, before wincing at a crack of thunder. Knowing her daughter wouldn't likely sleep in her own bed that night, Astrid stood up with her daughter in her arms, with a light grunt of effort.

"Since daddy isn't home, do you want to stay with me tonight, baby?" Astrid asked her gently. Looking from the jagged forks of lightning from outside the bedroom window to her mother, Siri nodded silently.

"Come on then," Astrid said as she pulled back the covers to which Siri immediately buried herself into. Just as she was getting comfortable though, she suddenly emitted a giggle as she looked in the direction of the door.

"Looks like we have a visitor, mummy."

Astrid sighed and followed her daughter's line of sight, and sure enough, there was Leif standing by the doll, his Monstrous Nightmare doll, Smoky, in his arms.

"Mummy, can I sleep with you?" the little boy asked timidly. "Thor is scary."

Heaving a great sigh, Astrid held out her arms with a smile of acquiescence. "Come on then, sweetie. Might as well join us," she said as Leif came padding up to them and got into the bed in between his mother and sister.

"Mummy, I miss daddy," the 3 year old said as he looked at his father's empty spot in the bed. "When he be home?"

"He'll be home soon, baby," Astrid promised him gently, with a kiss to his untidy auburn hair. "As long as the storm hasn't caught him, he'll be home before you know it." She looked out the window with slight nervousness as lightning flashed across the open sky. "I hope."

\* \* \*

><p>"WHERE IN THE NAME OF THOR DID THIS COME FROM?!"<p>

Over the roar of the wind, Hiccup could faintly hear the terrified growl of Toothless struggling considerably in the strong winds they were trapped in. All around them were black eddies of cloud like ash-stained cloth, the flashes of light from the storm rendering them steel grey for an instant. As they flew on, a fork of lightning crashed right in front of them, causing Toothless to screech and halt where he was, resulting in Hiccup having to cling onto the saddle for dear life.

"It's too dangerous, bud!" Hiccup shouted over the power of the storm. "We have to head back!" Looking around, Hiccup could see nothing but a swirling miasma of black and bright to his astonishment. It was only an hour before that they were flying in darkened storm clouds which they\_ thought\_ were headed straight by them. Within a few minutes though, the storm had engulfed them before they had had any chance of escape.

"If I'd known this was coming, I wouldn't have left," Hiccup said anxiously as he instinctively ducked as a clap of thunder sounded right above his head. Below him, Toothless warbled fearfully as the heavy rain turned to hail storms, causing Hiccup to yell in surprise.

"Astrid is going to \_kill\_ me for flying out in this!"

Toothless let out a fearful roar as a vast gust of wind suddenly propelled them sideways, Hiccup trying his best to manoeuvre out of the storm's path. Looking around, Hiccup made a decision and he adjusted the tail fin with a pat to the Night Fury's head.

"We're turning around, bud!" Hiccup yelled. "We can't keep going in this. We'll fly above the clouds if we can and head back when it's safe!"

Roaring in approval, Toothless turned around and began his way back to where they'd come from, before he suddenly stopped where he was. Casting his eyes up to his friend, Hiccup noted the look of confusion etched in the dragon's eyes and for a moment, his brows furrowed in confusion, then his stomach dropped as he looked around the stormy skies. In all the confusion, they must have been swept off course. Neither Viking nor dragon had any idea as to where they were.

"Shit!" Hiccup exclaimed in a panic as another bolt of lightning narrowly missed them by inches, making his hair stand on end.

Hiccup's heart began to race as he frantically looked around for somewhere to go; \_anywhere\_. As his attention was diverted though,

Hiccup suddenly felt a peculiar prickling sensation flood through his body from toe to head, almost like someone was pulling the hair on his arm, but through his entire body. This sensation began to build in intensity, especially in his head, until a sudden realisation dawned on him: He was about to be struck by lightning. Before he could react, save a reflexive blink, it had struck him. He could feel it strike him on his left shoulder near his neck, and travel in a wave through his body before reaching his leg. He was numb; to him, his entire world was a black void pierced only by the distant, berserked screeches of Toothless. Suddenly the quiet disharmony was shattered by the hammerblow-on-anvil-like strike of lightning on the metal in Toothless's tail fin; the void became a whirling, whistling screeching, ringing, blurred din as his addled brain recognized that he was falling, but could not urge his body to do anything to remedy the situation.

As the world whirled around him, Hiccup thought he distinctly heard a tiny screech and a flash of green whiz past him as they continued to fall. He didn't have time to think about it though as in the next moment he and Toothless had landed in the ocean with an almighty splash, Toothless roaring in panic as he struggled to stay afloat. As Toothless struggled to stay afloat under him, Hiccup was barely aware of his surroundings, only hearing the loud roar of the wind and thunder, the flashing lights of the sky and the crashing rain hitting him so fiercely, it was like a drumbeat upon his head.

Then everything went black.

\* \* \*

><p><em>So that's the end of the first part and I can promise you things are going to get very interesting from here! We will know a bit about what's happening with Hiccup throughout, but not so much that it takes away the pain Astrid will go through. Next chapter, they will know Hiccup is missing and try and find him. Also, I know a lot of you may have picked up something with Astrid, but I'm not saying anything just yet! :p Siri's fear of storms is not a random thing that I wrote in either, it's going to lead to a very heartbreaking scene with her next chapter that I came up with the other day, so get ready! For anyone wondering what's with all the storms though, it's at the end of Berk's very short summer and storm season, and Hiccup does say it hails the other three months lol<em>

\_I want to credit my boyfriend, Alex, for helping me with this chapter as he helped with a fair bit of the descriptive parts in the last scene and a few others scattered throughout the chapter. He is so much better at descriptive writing and that bit needed to be better than average, and I think he did a great job! \_

\_Ok, I should have the next chapter up in a fortnight, so until then, \*\*PLEASE, PLEASE, \*\*\_\_\*\*DON'T FORGT TO REVIEW! I HAVE BEEN PLANNING THIS STORYLINE ALL YEAR, SO I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK OF IT! :) Remember though, I do not tolerate flames, but constructive criticism is accepted. \*\*\_\_As an extra note too, I am very flattered for many reviewers asking for quick updates, and it makes me happy that I have such wonderful readers, but please understand that I can only write as fast as I can. If I write a chapter too fast, I might ruin it, so I'm taking my time because of this. I hope you all understand :) But thank you for asking anyway. Once a fortnight is my

goal from now on though, but I will try to be quicker if I'm able to be. \_

\_Thanks for reading! :D\_

## 28. Chapter 28: Revelations

\_Hey guys! Look, I'm updating on time like I promised :) Which is lucky considering it's been a case of life imitating art where I live right now and we've just gone through 8 days of severe thunderstorms in a row! It's been a freaky nightmare right now, but at least it's been good material to work with lol! Something tells me Australia is going to have a long stormy summer though. Oh well.\_

\_Anyway, here is the second part of my four parter storyline. The first half of this storyline gave me writers block like you wouldn't believe, but by the time I got halfway through, I got the last 3000 words written in 2 days! So it's being updated on time thank goodness. \_

\_A word of warning before you begin. Some of you are going to hate me for awhile by the end of this chapter :p You'll know what I'm talking about soon, but I make no apologies! I worked hard on this storyline and had it planned for months and I am quite happy with how this turned out, but it's going to get very emotional after this, so good luck! As promised last chapter too, you will also know what's going on with Hiccup during this chapter, but he is not the main focus. I tried to not have him in it, but the story would have been badly written and been really stupid by the end of it if I didn't, so I had to make a few changes during planning, but I like it this way. \_

\_I really hope you all like this chapter (minus a few of you who will hate me by the end of it lol. If you do, please don't tell me. I'd rather not know, unless you're joking of course!) I spend a week on just half of it, and I was a little worried about it for awhile that it wasn't very good, so I hope it's ok. I apologise that this is my second longest chapter though, but I couldn't cut it, so it stayed long. \_

\_Anyway, on with the chapter!\_

\* \* \*

<p><span>Chapter 28 â€" Revelations<span>

\* \* \*

<p>"Ergh, what a mess."<p>

Picking up a large branch in front of her, Astrid cast her eyes around the rest of Berk. All around her lay the remains of the previous nights storm which the Vikings had already begun to clean up. Leaves, branches, mud and the occasional deep puddle littered the village like a tornado had torn through the place, resulting in a number of damaged houses to add to the mess upon the ground.

"Wow," Astrid said in bewilderment, looking around the strewn mess of debris. "I don't know who made Thor angry last night, but I hope it wasn't us. What a mess."



"There are branches \_everywhere,\_" Siri said, eyes wide with astonishment, as she bent down to pick up a branch that was nearly as tall as her. "The wind \_must \_have been strong. These branches are from the forest."

"As are most of the leaves," Astrid added, as she poked her shoe towards a pile of golden brown leaves. "The wind must have been gale force to send them into the village in these amounts."

"It was," Valka said, as she came up behind them, arms full of broken branches. "I went outside to check for loose items and almost got blown away myself." Dropping the branches onto the ground, she nodded towards the trees near the Great Hall. "Those were bending so far I thought they were going to fall. It was like being in a waterspout out here."

"We weren't the only ones hit either."

Turning around at the sound of Gobber's voice, Astrid watched as the older Viking nodded out towards the horizon where it was nothing but clear open sky; a far cry from the night before.

"Trader Johan just told us that the whole of the Archipelago got hit last night," Gobber said as he came to a standstill beside them. "He got caught in it on the way to Outcast Island and had to come back, but he ran into the chief of the Stonehead tribe before then. He said the whole area was hit by it."

Astrid's eyebrows widened in shock. "The \_whole \_area?"

"Apparently," Gobber said with another quick glance at the blue sky above him. He frowned slightly. "I hope the chief wasn't caught in it. He was coming home yesterday wasn't he?"

"Gobber!" Astrid hissed quickly.

"What?"

Quickly moving her eyes downwards with a look of reproof on her face, Gobber followed her gaze, only to quickly snap his mouth shut. Siri had emitted a small squeak of fear at hearing Gobber's statement and now had her sapphire blue eyes open wide with fear, as she clung to her mother's arm. She looked up at her mother, anxiety fluttering in her stomach like a million butterflies having taken flight at once.

"What if daddy really \_did \_get caught in it?" the girl asked her mother fearfully. "The wind was so strong; Toothless's tail wouldn't have coped. And daddy's leg..."

"Siri," Astrid intervened quickly as she knelt down to her daughter's level, "calm down, baby." Reaching up to stroke her daughter's cheek, Astrid gave the little girl a gentle smile. "Yes, daddy may have got caught up in it, but that doesn't mean anything bad has happened to him."

"That's right, lass," Gobber said quickly, patting her shoulder warmly. "I didn't mean to say anything happened, just that I hoped he

wasn't caught in it, that's all." He chuckled. "Who knows? He probably knew the storm was coming and stayed where he was. The poor bugger is probably stuck listening to the other Chiefs right now."

Siri giggled, and as she did, her eyes became less fearful. Seizing upon the opportunity, Valka quickly stepped forward and stroked her granddaughter's hair back with a small smile.

"Why don't you go and help Lennart with the cleanup, sweetheart?" she asked her. "Leif is helping Kelda at her house, why don't you go and make a game out of it?"

"Okay!" Siri agreed with a wide smile, before she ran off towards Snotlout and Anna's house where Lennart and Sigmund were walking around with their arms full of sticks.

As the eight year old ran off, Astrid emitted a loud sigh before rubbing her hand over her face. Seeing this, Valka frowned and placed a hand on the woman's shoulder.

"Is she still scared of storms?"

Astrid nodded as she looked over towards her daughter, now helping her friend with the mess around his house, then back at her mother-in-law.

"It's not getting any better," she said despondently. "She came straight in with me last night as soon as it started and ended up staying with me. I thought she'd be over it by now." The Viking woman suddenly frowned and looked out over the ocean in front of them, worry fixed on her face. "It doesn't help that Hiccup was supposed to be coming home yesterday, too," she added quietly, so quietly that even Valka had barely heard what she said.

"You don't think Hiccup stayed at the Shivering Shores, do you?"

Astrid sighed, without taking her eyes off the calm ocean in front of her. "To be honest, I don't know," she admitted, as she turned to face her mother-in-law. "Hiccup \_said \_he would never fly in a storm like that just to get home early."

"But you don't believe him?"

"No, I do," Astrid said quickly. "It's just... I can't shake this feeling that something isn't right is all." She looked at both Valka and Gobber who were staring back at her in surprise. Noticing this, she gave them a shaky laugh. "I don't know," she admitted with a shrug, "it's just that storm came in so fast, Hiccup may not have had a chance to avoid it. Siri was right there."

"I think you're letting the lass's fear get to you, Astrid," Gobber responded with a chuckle. "You know what the Chief is like, stubborn as both parents put together; he'll have known what to do." Seeing Valka's look of amusement, Gobber gave her a sheepish grin. "No offense there, Val."

"None taken, Gobber," Valka replied with a chuckle, before she turned to her daughter-in-law with a reassured smile. "Gobber's right, dear."

I think you're letting Sيري's worries get to you. Hiccup's been in storms before; he would have known what to do. He'll probably be home tomorrow, complaining about the storm making him late."

Astrid snorted. "Yeah, that's him alright," Astrid agreed with a smile. Unable to shake the butterflies that had taken up residence in her stomach though, she bit her lip. "I just wish I knew where he was, at least."

\* \* \*

><p>Pain. That was all Hiccup could feel as his mind slowly came back to consciousness. Eyes, feeling heavy, all he could feel was pain as he became aware of the feelings erupting through his body. His head throbbed like his heartbeat, and a warm patch on his head lead him to the dull realisation that his head may be bleeding. As he moved to touch it, his entire left leg seared in agony, causing him to bite down on his own teeth suddenly. Had there been a stampede in the roosts? A Gronckle rampage? A thousand thunderdrums yelling at him? Coughing, he realised his chest ached; he was sure at least one rib on his left side was broken.<p>

\_What happened\_? Hiccup asked himself as he suddenly howled in agony by another sharp pain that shot up his leg as he tried to move it. Squeezing his eyes shut, the young chief clutched his leg, before emitting another painful groan. What was wrong with his leg?

"Don't move, young man, your legs in a bad way."

Perplexed, Hiccup blearily opened his eyes. As they slowly adjusted to the dim setting he found himself in, he could just make out a couple of large shapes bending over him in concern. Gazing around with foggy eyes, Hiccup came to the realisation he was in a healers' hut; he could smell the musty tinctures and poultices which had been applied to his body and could see some of the herbs and other ingredients hanging or in jars around the room. A small fire was burning in a fireplace on the far wall, and he could feel a rhythm which told him the building he was in was very close to the sea.

"Are you alright, lad? You fell from quite a height."

Turning his attention to the Viking in front of him, Hiccup frowned slightly at the realisation that he had no idea where he was. Having travelled to quite many of places for meetings as Chief and explorer, Hiccup had met many Chiefs; but the man in front of him was not one of them.

"What happened?" he asked as a sharp pain emitted from the back of his head. Hissing in pain, Hiccup looked up at the unfamiliar scene around him, with a furrowed brow. "Where am I?"

"You're in our healing hut, young man," answered an elderly woman who was applying something to his head, just behind him. "On the Windfall Isles" she added quickly, noticing the look of bewilderment on the man's face. "You got struck by lightning two days ago, remember?"

Hiccup's eyes suddenly widened before he suddenly bolted upright, making the older woman exclaim in surprise. "Where's Toothless? He is

alright? His tail got hit before we fell, and he can't fly on his own!"

"The dragon?" the burly Viking in front of him, asked in surprise. "Lad, he's-"

"Where is he?!" Hiccup interrupted in a panic, his eyes filling with tears; of pain or worry, Hiccup wasn't really sure, as he tried to sit up, pain radiating down his body.

"Whoa, lad," the Viking said quickly, "calm down, the dragon's just-"

The door to the hut burst open and before Hiccup could barely blink, a large black blur rushed in and tackled him to the cot he was on.

"-fine..." the Viking finished with a chuckle.

"Toothless!" Hiccup exclaimed in relief, as the dragon covered him in several licks, just as relieved to see his rider as his rider was to see him. Emitting a laugh, Hiccup tried to deter the dragon by pushing him away. "Bud, I'm okay, stop it! It still doesn't wash out you know!"

Toothless stopped what he was doing, but remained where he was as Hiccup took a shaky breath of relief, before he wrapped his arms around the dragon's neck in an affectionate embrace. "Thank Thor you're okay, bud" Hiccup murmured to the dragon, to which the Night Fury responded with a low croon of agreement, before he nuzzled the man's head, resulting in a sudden yelp from said Viking.

"Wish I could say the same thing for me," Hiccup hissed, as pain shot through his body. "What happened to me?" he asked the Vikings surrounding him.

"You were struck twice, both in the head and your leg," another Viking, a middle aged woman, answered this time. "We were coming home in our boat and saw you and the dragon caught in the storm. Before we could blink, you were falling into the water. By the time we got to you, you were unconscious." She looked at Toothless, curled up protectively around the cot, a smile forming on her face. "That dragon of yours was a little dazed, but remained with you the whole time."

"That's Toothless for you," Hiccup responded with a warm smile, before his face went blank with a sudden realisation. "Hang on," he said quickly. "Did you say I've been out for \_two days?\_"

"Well, a day and a half, really."

Hiccup blanched and fell back onto the cot, closing his eyes. "Shit! Astrid is going to kill me!" He hissed as another wave of pain shot through his head, side and leg.

"Astrid?" the man asked with a frown. Hiccup cracked his eyes open as the man looked at him in a sudden realisation. "Do you mean Chieftainess Astrid of Berk? Does that mean you are \_Chief Hiccup\_ of Berk?"

Hiccup's eyes widened in surprise, but he nodded. "Yeah, that's me," he confirmed, before he glanced at them in bewilderment. "How do you know me, though? I've never travelled to the Windfall Isles."

"Trader Johan," the man stated simply. "We're a trading island, lad. We know all the islands in the Archipelago and beyond, even if we've never met them." A smile formed on the man's lips as he held out his hand for Hiccup. "I'm Chief Godric of the Windfall Isles." He gestured to the woman beside him. "This is my wife, Iona," before at last, he nodded to the elderly woman, now poking at Hiccup's ribs with a stern expression. "And Healer Oili, whose been treating you nonstop since we arrived this morning."

Hiccup took the hand Godric offered with a small smile. "Chief Hiccup of Berk," he repeated before nodding to the dragon beside him. "And Toothless. Alpha of all dragons." As he nodded, his head suddenly seared in pain and clenching his eyes shut, he gave a small hiss of agony.

"Don't move your head like that!" Oili shrieked. "You have a small crack at the back of your head."

"A crack?" Hiccup croaked. "How did that happen? I thought I was hit by lightning."

"You were," Iona said with a slight grimace. "But you had the misfortune of falling onto some debris in the water from our boat when you fell into the water. It's only a small one though, it won't take long to heal."

"Yes, but the lad has the added bonus of also having cracked ribs, a burnt leg- which has already seen enough damage- as well as the metal leg being cracked-"

"What!" Hiccup exclaimed frantically as he suddenly glanced down. Sure enough, his hand crafted leg was damaged, with small fractures crawling all up the metal. The top part of the same leg was red with burns and blistered in many areas, and as he tried to move it, his eyes watered in agony.

"Stop moving so much!" Oili clucked in disapproval. "You're hurt enough as it is!"

"I have to get home," Hiccup said in a panic, ignoring the elderly healer completely. "Astrid and the kids will be worried sick. I promised them I'd be home today for our anniversary!"

"You're not going anywhere!"

"Hold on, Oili," Godric said quickly. "You were heading home?" he asked Hiccup with a look of confusion. "Then how did you get this far east?"

Hiccup frowned. "I don't know," he admitted. "I was heading home from a meeting at the Shivering shores when I got caught in the storm. Just as we were about to be hit, I realised we must have gotten turned around somewhere."

"You must have been lost for hours to get this far, lad," Godric told

him, nervously.

Hiccup's breathing sped up as he heard this, and he gave a grunt of pain as he tried to sit up. "I've got to get home," he said frantically. "I can't stay here." He turned to Godric with a desperate expression. "Is there a boat I can take home?"

Godric looked crestfallen as he asked this. "I'm sorry, Hiccup," he said, "but all our boats are either out trading or were destroyed by the storm." He turned to his wife, whose face mirrored his own.

"We limped home ourselves," Iona said with a shudder. "Our boat isn't seaworthy right now."

Hiccup looked frantically at his leg, and Toothless's tail. "Then can you show me the blacksmiths? I need to repair these."

"You're not going anywhere!" Oili repeated with a stern look at the young Chief. "Not in the condition you're in! You'd never make it home like this, especially if you're caught in another storm!"

"Oili's right, Hiccup," Iona said gently. "You'd never make it like this. It's a two day flight from here to Berk on a good day." She looked at Hiccup's paling face as he struggled to keep his pain at bay. "Plus, you really shouldn't be out of bed right now."

Hiccup reached up and took a handful of hair between his hands, frantically searching for a solution. Eyes lighting up, he quickly looked around.

"Has anyone tended to my Terrible Terror? I had him in my satchel."

Looking at Godric and Iona's faces, his face fell as they noticed their perplexed looks.

"Terrible Terror?" Iona asked. "No, there was no terror in the bag when we picked it up."

"But-" Hiccup started, before he suddenly remembered the small blur of green before he fell into the ocean. His stomach dropped. "He took off when I was hit," he said in realisation, before he suddenly dragged himself off the cot, ignoring the searing pain in his body. "He'll get back to Berk, without a letter and everyone will start to worry. I have to get back!"

"You'd never make it, lad!" Godric said as he tried to push the man back onto the cot. "I'm sorry, but it's either having them worry for a little while, or you never getting back at all." He watched as Hiccup slammed his fists onto the bed in frustration, doubling up in pain as he did so. "Which may happen if you leave in this state," he added gently.

"But...my wife-"

"-may worry for awhile, but it can't be helped," Iona said calmly. "It's either that or never make it home at all. I think a few days worry is better in this case." Seeing Hiccup's frantic expression, along with the tears of pain and anger in his eyes, she reached out a

hand to him and rested it on his shoulder. "Trader Johan is due back here next week, Hiccup. Why don't you wait for him and then he'll take you home? Besides there's more storms coming, and I really don't want to be the one to explain to your wife that you killed yourself trying to get home."

Slumping his shoulders in defeat, Hiccup scrubbed at his watery eyes in frustration, before burying his head in his hands and running them down his face gently. He looked up at the three Vikings with a defeated sigh.

" Astrid is going to kill me when I get home."

\* \* \*

><p>"Still no sign of him?"<p>

Astrid tore her gaze away from the gold streaked horizon, where the sun was trapped behind a thick cover of clouds, emitting a soft honeyed glow in the sky. Turning her attention back to the present, the Viking warrior watched as Valka came up the hill to stand beside her, her eyes also fixed upon the sky. Giving her daughter-in-law a questioning look, Astrid sighed and shook her head in response.

"No," she said. "I've been here for an hour, and there hasn't been anything at all in the sky, save a few birds." She bit her lip, her eyes filling with worry. "I really thought he would be home by now is all. Even if he did turn back the other night, I thought he would have left as soon as it was safe."

"Maybe there's been more storms where he is?" Valka suggested hopefully, anxiety evident in her tone. "Hiccup wouldn't miss your anniversary for no reason."

As Astrid opened her mouth to reply though, she suddenly heard the loud shriek of her daughter from down in the village.

"Mummy, its Sharpshot!"

The two women quickly exchanged a glance before rushing off down the hill and into the village where a number of Vikings were crowded around one area in the town square. As the two of them approached, they saw Siri kneeling down on the ground, with the form of an exhausted looking Sharpshot resting in her arms. Upon hearing her mother and grandmother approaching, Siri looked up at them, concern filling her features.

"He doesn't look too good, mum," Siri said as she carefully stood up, Sharpshot flopping in her arms, as his tongue stuck out in exhaustion. Checking the little dragon for a letter, Astrid's stomach did a flip flop as she noticed that there was no mail attached to the Terror whatsoever. Not only that, but Sharpshot looked as if he had been in a fight with a larger dragon. He was exhausted, his wing was a little crooked, and he could barely move. She looked at Valka and Gobber, who had just joined them as panic beginning to well up inside her stomach.

"It may not be what you're thinking, lass," Gobber said quickly as he took the little dragon off Siri. "Maybe Sharpshot \_had \_a letter, but

he got caught up in the storm." He looked down at the small form of the Terror in his arms, before looking back up at Astrid. "I mean have you seen a Terror try to fly in strong winds?" he asked with a slight smile. "It's like a leaf in the wind."

"Gobber, you know as well as I do that Hiccup wouldn't let Sharpshot make a delivery in a storm," Valka said quietly. "Something's not right."

"And Sharpshot doesn't go anywhere without daddy," Siri added, her voice shaky. She looked up at her mother, her eyes filled with alarm. "Daddy got caught in it, didn't he?" She quickly glanced out towards the ocean and then back at her mother, who looked uncertain. "What if he's hurt?" she asked suddenly, panic spreading throughout her body. "Midnight came to get you when I was sick that time, what if Sharpshot is doing the same?"

Astrid's eyes went wide. Looking from her daughter to the drowsy form of the Terrible Terror in Gobber's arms, she noticed the dragon kept looking out towards the rippling water, making a little squawk each time. As the memory of Midnight doing the exact same thing came flooding back to the mother, Astrid quickly turned on her heel and began to shout orders in the most authoritative voice she could muster.

"Get your dragons ready, we're going to find Hiccup!" Astrid yelled quickly, before turning to her mother who was standing behind them, with Leif in her arms. "Mum, could you look after the kids for me? I'm not staying behind when Hiccup could be hurt."

"But mum-"

"Of course I will, sweetheart," Ansfrida said quickly, interrupting Siri's protest. "Just be careful out there yourself; you look awfully pale."

"I'm just worried, mum" Astrid replied hastily, before she turned back to the others. "Guys, we need to leave! If Hiccup and Toothless have been injured, we have to get to them soon. Bring your satchels!"

"Mum-" Siri tried again.

"Speaking of which-" Ansfrida said, without even acknowledging her granddaughter, as she handed her daughter her own satchel. "- I got yours for you."

"Thanks mum, I-"

"MUM!" Siri squealed.

Breaking off the conversation, Astrid quickly looked down at her daughter and her heart plummeted as she saw the look of desperation on her daughter's face. Her eyes were filled to the brim with tears and she was slightly shaky as she looked up at her mother.

"I don't want to stay here!" Siri protested, a little shakily. "I want to come with you!"

Meeting her own mother's sad gaze, Astrid sighed before bending down



beside her daughter.

"Sweetie, I know you want to come," Astrid said gently, as she reached up to stroke her daughter's cheek, "but this isn't something that I want my daughter to be doing; especially in storm season. I don't want you to get hurt."

"But daddy and Toothless need our help! What if another storm \_does\_ come in, and they'll all alone?" Siri asked fearfully, tears filling her dark blue eyes. "Daddy can't be out in a storm!"

"Shh." Pulling her daughter into a loving embrace, Astrid reached up to stroke her hair softly as Siri started to sob. "It's going to be alright, baby, I promise." Letting go of her daughter just enough for her to look into her face, Astrid took a hold of her chin and lifted her head up to look into her bright glassy eyes. "I promise, Seer, we \_will\_ \_find\_ daddy and Toothless and bring them home. We won't leave them out in the storms."

Sniffing loudly, Siri wiped a hand across her eyes with a slight nod to her mother, who gave her a small smile, before kissing her cheek gently.

"We'll be back as soon as we can, sweetie. But for now, you, Grandma Ansfrida and Grandpa are in charge, alright?"

Siri nodded with a small smile forming on her lips. "I'll make sure no one kills each other, mummy."

Astrid chuckled. "I know you will, sweetie." Standing up, Astrid quickly gave her son a swift kiss on his messy auburn locks. "You be good, sweetie, alright?" she told him sternly.

Leif nodded. "Yes, mummy," he said. "Find daddy, peeze."

"I will, I promise," Astrid said softly, before she swiftly stood up and turned to face the others. "Alright, let's get going, who knows what's happened to them since that storm!"

"What's the plan, lass?" Gobber asked her as she hurried over to them and swung herself up onto Stormfly's saddle. "Is there any place do you think we should look?"

"Maybe we should head to the Shivering Shores first?" Eret answered swiftly before Astrid could open her mouth. "You know?-" he added quickly seeing Astrid's eyes on him, "-in case he \_has\_ made it back there. And if he hasn't, we'll ask where Hiccup went and go from there."

Astrid nodded. "Sounds like a plan," she agreed, before she raised her voice. "Alright, let's get going! We'll head to the Shivering Shores first, and with luck, he might be there." She swung herself up onto Stormfly's saddle. "And if he is there, I'm going to \_kill\_ him for worrying me."

\* \* \*

><p>"What do you mean he's not here?"<p>

Vidar looked at the young woman in confusion, before looking around

at the rest of the small party of Berkians, all of whom had the same hopeful expression as the woman in front of him. He knew as well as anyone something was going on when he and the other Chiefs saw the arrival of a small group of Berkians, but he was hoping this wasn't what they were going to ask.

"I'm sorry my lady, but Hiccup isn't here," Vidar answered carefully. "He wanted to get home for your anniversary, so he left as soon as the meeting was finished. He should have been home by now."

Astrid's stomach dropped further upon hearing this and as she looked around at the others, she noticed that their faces had all adopted identical looks of anxiety. She turned back to Vidar, whose own expression was one of uneasiness.

"When did he leave?" Astrid asked nervously, as the butterflies began to take up residence in her stomach.

Vidar looked apprehensive at telling this frightened young woman the answer, but seeing her pleading expression, he sighed. "Three days ago," he answered hesitantly.

Astrid's heart plummeted and began to race as she looked around to Valka who had gone pale at the answer. Beside her, Fishlegs looked a little uneasy, as did Gobber and Eret who both sighed.

"Oh boy," Gobber said softly as Astrid suddenly looked back towards Vidar, willing her heartbeat to slow.

"Are you sure it was three days ago?" she asked.

"Astrid, I was with them when they left," Vidar gently explained. "Snorri and I were teasing him about wanting to be home for his anniversary and he wanted to leave before any more...storms...hit..." he trailed off with a look of horror towards the Vikings in front of him, before he shook his head and frowned. "But the lad promised he'd come back if he got caught in a storm though."

"It wouldn't have made a difference," Fishlegs interjected. "The entire Archipelago got that storm, Hiccup and Toothless would have been caught either way."

"Why do you think the other Chiefs are only going home now?" Vidar asked with a nod towards the waiting ships, where a number of Vikings were just about to set sail. "We didn't want to risk being caught again after the other night." He suddenly looked at Astrid with an interested glance. "What are you doing here so soon anyway?" he asked. "After he didn't come home, I thought you would have assumed he was still here and he'd be home soon."

"Sharpshot turned up at home without Hiccup," Snotlout answered before anyone else could reply. "We were hoping he'd had a letter, but it had got lost in the storm."

Now it was Vidar's turn to pale. "Sharpshot?" he asked quickly. "But the little guy was still sick when Hiccup left. He couldn't have flown very long, unless...he had no choice in the matter."

Breathing heavily, Astrid quickly rushed off towards the dragons, Vidar and the others quickly following.

"When did he leave the other day?" she asked Vidar quickly.

"Um... mid afternoon," Vidar said thoughtfully, understanding where Astrid's thoughts were at. "There were some dark clouds in the distance, but nothing threatening. He would have been halfway home by the time it hit."

"Did he go the usual direction home?"

"Never goes any other way," the Chief shrugged. "Unless the storm turned him around," he added quickly after Astrid frowned. "One of the other Chiefs got caught in it on the way home to and had to return; said he almost didn't find his way back." He pointed further towards the east. "The wind was blowing to the east during the storm" he explained. "He might have gone that way instead. He might just be lost."

"Or injured," Fishlegs said nervously, earning him a glare from both Astrid and Valka. "Sorry," he apologised.

"But you're right," Astrid said quietly, before turned back to the rest of the group. "We're headed east! Come on, we have to get going." Turning back to Vidar, she managed a small smile. "Thanks for the help, I appreciate it."

"Its fine, my lady," Vidar answered with a returning smile, before his expression turned serious. "Just find him. No one should have been out in that, him especially."

Astrid nodded gravely; before she quickly hoisted herself up on to her saddle, and flying off to join the dragon riders who were already in the air. Catching up to them, she pointed towards the east.

" We fly close to the water! If anyone spots anything, just yell."

\* \* \*

><p>"Um, Astrid, I don't know about you, but I'm not seeing anything!"<p>

"Yeah, we've been flying for hours. Even Hiccup wouldn't have got \_that \_lost."

"Here's an idea; why don't you stop complaining and actually look!" Astrid snapped as she turned her head in the twin's direction, who had been complaining for the past hour.

"Er, we \_are \_looking, Astrid," Ruffnut said calmly with a quick glare towards her brother. "But it's been hours and I don't know about you, but I haven't seen \_anything \_that even has to do with Hiccup. I'm pretty sure even he couldn't get this lost!"

"How would you know?!" Astrid retorted angrily as she sent a glare in her friend's direction. "Have you ever been in winds that strong!?"

"Er, guys?" Snotlout said suddenly from beside them.

"No," Ruffnut replied, completely ignoring Snotlout's interjection.

"But I've seen Hiccup fly in conditions as bad; I thought he would have known what to do at least!"

"Ergh, guys!" Snotlout said louder.

"Oh, and you think you would?!" Astrid snorted heatedly, ignoring the gasps of the others around her and Snotlout's annoyed groan. "You have no idea what Hiccup would have gone through during that storm. For all we know he could be stranded at sea!"

"Astrid, calm down," Valka said gently with a hand to her daughter in law's shoulder. "This isn't going to find Hiccup."

"GUYS, THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE WATER!"

"What?!" Astrid said quickly as she turned her attention to where Snotlout was pointing. Squinting at the wavy water, Astrid could just make out some carved wood just below them. Banking lower, Astrid had Stormfly gently hover over it as she took a closer look. She sighed.

"It's just some debris from a boat," she said in disappointment. "Someone else must have got caught in the storm too."

"Wonder where they went?" Gobber asked with a slight frown as he looked around, as if expecting to see the boat still around. Astrid followed suit.

"It's only a little bit," Astrid said, as she urged Stormfly on. "They probably got out before it caused any real damage."

"Do you think they may have seen Hiccup?" Valka asked hopefully.

Astrid shrugged. "If they did, they're long gone. It would be a waste of time to try to find them." Astrid looked back as the debris had already vanished from sight. "Besides, we have no idea where they were headed anyway."

"Guys, it's Toothless's tail fin!" Eret called suddenly, a little ahead of them. Astrid whipped her head around and followed Eret's pointed finger towards a glimpse of red in the water below. Astrid's stomach jumped suddenly.

"Stormfly, tail flip."

Flying closer to the water, the Nadder scooped the piece of fabric up out of the roaring sea with her tail, and into Astrid's outstretched arms. Looking down at the material enclosed in her hands, Astrid's heart felt like it had stopped. It was Toothless's tail fin alright, and it was burned badly in one corner and quite tattered. From the looks of it, it had been there a few days.

"He got struck by lightning," Astrid said quietly in realisation, as she looked up at the others. Holding up the material, she pointed towards the burnt bit in the material, her breathing becoming a little rapid. "I recognise that burn from houses on Berk. Hiccup and Toothless got struck and fell into the water." Looking frantically around the vast ocean surrounding them, Astrid flew even closer to the water, eyes scanning everywhere they could land on. "They have to

be around here somewhere!" she called back to the others, who had followed her closer to the water. "How far could they have floated, Fishlegs?" she asked him as he flew beside her.

"A fair bit if it was a few days ago," Fishlegs said anxiously. "Plus he's also missing his satchel." He held up the item he just plucked out of the water in front of her eyes. Astrid and Valka blanched and exchanged a fearful glance.

"We've got to find them!" Astrid said desperately before she looked at everyone frantically. "Search for any sign of them, they have to be in the water somewhere." Astrid looked at Valka's frantic expression before looking back at the water. They have to be here, she thought hopefully. Hiccup's the most stubborn Viking I've ever met. He'll be here.

\* \* \*

><p>"Astrid, we're been searching for hours. Wouldn't we found him by now?"<p>

Astrid didn't answer. After several hours of searching the ocean past where the tail fin was found, none of them had yet to find any trace of either Hiccup or Toothless after the satchel. All around them was miles and miles of vast ocean, and scattered islands that mostly only housed dragons. The few islands that did have Vikings living there hadn't seen hide-nor-hair of the dragon rider or his dragon. Every island that came up empty led to a further sinking pit within Astrid's stomach, which was beginning to deepen further and further as they went along.

Astrid was startled out of her reverie by a sudden blast of icy wind hitting her face. Looking up, Astrid began to notice that there were dark storm clouds beginning to build around them and a strong wind was blowing from the direction they were headed. They were not as threatening as the storm a few days before, but they were still eerie enough to make herself and others feel slightly uncomfortable.

"That storm isn't huge, but we can't stay in it," Fishlegs said hesitantly with a look in Astrid's direction. When Astrid looked back at him with a desperate expression, he took a shaky breath and sighed. "Astrid, we can't keep going in this. We... we have to go back."

"We are not going back!" Astrid yelled. "Hiccup has been out here for three days, in Thor-knows- what conditions. We are not giving up just because of some bad weather!"

"Astrid," Valka said, her voice quiet and defeated. "We've been searching for hours and still no sign of them."

"Which just means we have to look harder!" Astrid screamed, although the hope she had was beginning to fade. "Hiccup and Toothless have survived a lot more than this" Astrid added, her voice beginning to crack. "We can't just give up!"

"Astrid," Gobber interjected quietly. "We can't do anything more. There's no sign of them and honestly...I don't think we're going to find anything-"

"WE ARE NOT GIVING UP!" Astrid screamed hysterically, taking the others by surprise. "Hiccup is out there and I know it!" Taking a hold of a clump of hair, Astrid's breathing began to become laboured as she began to realise the reality of the situation.

"Astrid..." Valka said, her voice breaking off.

"I promised Siri I would bring her daddy home!" Astrid sobbed. "I can't break my promise to my daughter!" She whipped her head towards Eret, who winced at the look of desperation upon the woman's face. "Eret, why haven't you helped?! Skullcrusher could find them if you used the tail fin!" She tried to shove the piece of material towards the two of them, but Eret held out his hand gently towards her.

"Astrid, you know as well as I do that we would have found him by now if he could do it," Eret said gently. "The storm did a number on any trace of smell that was left on it. Skullcrusher is as lost as the rest of us."

"But-!"

"Astrid!" Snotlout suddenly yelled, as he took hold of her arms gently. Stopping what she was doing, Astrid looked up at him in surprise. He sighed. "Astrid, there's nothing more we can do," he said dejectedly. "If we couldn't find him when the weather was good, how do you think we'd find him now?" Snotlout nodded towards the storm clouds ahead. "We have to head back, or we're going to end up the same way."

After a few moments of laboured breathing, Astrid suddenly slumped in Snotlout's arms and went silent. Over her head, Snotlout made a gesture to Stormfly who quickly nuzzled at her rider, helping her get back onto the saddle where she sat in silence. Beside her Valka was also silent, her face white. Behind them, everyone glanced at each other with the unspoken question. \_What's going to happen now?\_

\* \* \*

><p>"Something's wrong."<p>

Hiccup sat up from the chair he'd been sitting in, frowning at a sudden sinking sensation he felt in his chest, like he'd just been knocked clear from Toothless midflight. Taking a deep breath, he tried to ease the uneasy feeling, but it continued and gnawed at his insides even further, leaving him feel ill at ease.

"What's wrong, son?" Godric asked him from over by the fire. Hiccup had been offered hospitality by the Chief, something he was deeply grateful for, but the pain in his body and the urge to go home was making things a lot less desirable than they should have been, considering the house the Chief had for himself.

"There's something wrong," Hiccup repeated again, as he made a move to get up, but howling in pain, he slumped back down on the chair again. "I feel like something's going on that isn't right."

"What do you mean?" Iona asked him in bewilderment as she checked his head again. Hiccup winced as she touched the small crack at the back of his head, and his vision swam a little as he moved his damaged leg

and rib.

"I mean that something's wrong at home," Hiccup said anxiously. "I don't know what it is, but I feel like I should be home." Hiccup's eyes widened for a moment. "I think Astrid might be getting worried. I just have a funny feeling." Stubbornly, Hiccup held onto the chair and urged himself to stand, only to be pushed back down by Iona.

"Funny feeling or not, Hiccup, you can't leave," Iona said sternly. "If you leave now, you'll injure yourself more, you know that."

"But I have to get home," Hiccup said urgently as he once again tried to stand, only to be pushed down again, this time by Toothless, whose tail had been repaired by the local blacksmith. "Bud!"

"See, even the dragon knows you can't go anywhere," Godric said as he watched Hiccup hiss in pain at the impact of his rib on wood. "You wouldn't last an hour in your condition."

"I don't care," Hiccup hissed painfully, as he stood up. "I have to get back. Astrid may be strong, but if she's worried, she'll panic."

"Hiccup, you sit down right now, or we'll lock you in this house," Iona said in annoyance. "You may be a grown man, but I will do it if it stops you killing yourself to get home."

"But Astrid is worried!" Hiccup protested, as he tried to get to the door, his leg wobbling beneath him. "And injured or not, I'm going home. Now."

Before Iona and Godric could barely blink, Hiccup had wrenched the door open and he and a very irritated Toothless, had burst out the door into the windy afternoon. Storm clouds were gathering overhead and the wind was enough to sting his leg and make his eyes water slightly. His metal leg hadn't been mended yet and he could feel it creaking as he hobbled along. His ribs screamed in pain and left him breathless, but he pushed on until he felt he was far enough away from the house. The feeling of anxiety hadn't left him, but had increased, causing him to hurriedly jump onto Toothless's saddle.

Piercing pain shot up his leg, and his ribs felt as if they were constricting him as he landed with a thud upon the saddle. Howling in agony, Hiccup's vision went out of focus as pain shot through his body from head to foot. Doubling over in agony, Toothless roared in panic, causing Godric and Iona to rush over to them, Oili in tow.

Vision swimming in and out of focus, Hiccup was barely able to hear Oili as she clucked in displeasure at his little stunt.

"Well lad, now you've done it," she was saying as Godric lifted him up from Toothless's back. "You won't be going home this week now, stubbornness or not." She looked at Godric with a stern expression. "Make sure he stays inside from now on."

\* \* \*

><p>The ride back to Berk for the search party was the quietest any of them had ever heard each other. Feelings of guilt and grief enveloped them like a fog, and besides from a few dejected glances towards one another, hardly anything was said, especially not by Astrid and Valka who sat as still as statues upon their dragons. While Valka looked as she didn't know what to do, Astrid beside her looked out past her dragon, seeing nothing. Her face was white and her hands upon the saddle were white knuckled and shaky. Even now and then she fidgeted, looking as if she'd rather be going anywhere but this direction.<p>

"What's going to happen now?" Eret asked quietly, shock radiating through him as much as it did the others. Fishlegs who had been quietly whispering to Ruffnut, who was as pale as Astrid, looked around, his expression unreadable.

"I...I don't know," he admitted, as he turned his attention towards the direction they'd come from, then towards Astrid, unresponsive to the chatter. "There's always hope that someone else found them, and that he'll be home sooner or later."

"Do you really believe that?" Gobber asked softly, who had flown up beside them. Fishlegs looked at the old Viking and sighed, with a quick shake of the head. "We searched further than they could have possibly drifted to" he admitted sorrowfully.

They went silent once more, until they suddenly saw the image of Berk coming up towards them. Upon seeing it, they flinched and looked around at each other nervously.

"We...we have no choice," Snotlout said uneasily.

"No, we don't," Astrid said, with no feeling at all in her voice, causing everyone to jump in their saddles. They hadn't heard her speak since they turned around.

Gobber cautiously held out a hand to the young woman and grasped her hand in his. "It'll be alright, lass," he said, although his voice betrayed his true feelings.

Astrid looked at him, her face blank as she shook her head. "We're telling our people that Hiccup couldn't be found," she said, a slight trace of bitterness in her voice. "That is anything but alright." She turned her head towards Berk where her stomach sunk at the sight of the village all yelling out to them in excitement as they ran towards them. Her heart beating a million miles an hour, the dragons landed around them all, the others looking around at each other nervously.

After a moment, it was Mulch who noticed something was wrong and looked around at the search party. "Where's Hiccup?" he asked.

The others all froze, mouths clenched shut as they tried to find a way to tell them the news. At last it was Fishlegs who finally spoke up, his voice shaky.

"We...we couldn't find him."

The whole village went silent immediately. Astrid's heart jumped in her chest as she looked down and saw Siri at the forefront of the



Vikings, her hand clasped in Lennart's as her eyes went wide with shock. Beside her were Ansfrida and Amund who looked up at their daughter in horror as they noticed the paleness in her face.

"What do you mean you couldn't find him?" Mulch asked nervously. "He couldn't have just vanished into thin air!"

"We went in the direction we think he got caught in during the storm," Fishlegs said. "We searched for hours before we found..." Taking a hold of the piece of fabric in his hands, he held it up for the village to see, and upon locking eyes on it, they all gasped. "We found Toothless's tail fin pretty far east. It looks...looks as if they were struck by lightning, considering the burn marks. They must have fallen into the water." Fishlegs looked around at the stunned faces of the Vikings and he heaved a sigh. "We searched for hours past where we found it. There was no sign of him. Another storm came in while we were searching. We had no choice but to turn back."

Everyone was silent. None of them wanted to believe it. They had only just lost their previous Chief a bit over a decade ago, they couldn't lose Hiccup too! Looking hopefully around at Astrid, their faces dropped as they looked at her. Her expression said it all as she silently slid off Stormfly's back, her expression blank.

"There's nothing more we can do," she said quietly, as she looked into her daughter's face which was staring at her mother in shock. She took a step towards her daughter. "I'm sorry, baby, but...but we can't keep searching. Every minute they could be going further and further away or..." Astrid trailed off, before she stepped closer to her daughter. To Astrid's horror, Siri suddenly took a step back, with a look of loathing towards her mother.

"You promised!" she screamed at her. "You said you would find daddy and bring him back! You promised!"

Astrid's eyes filled with tears as she tried to get closer to her daughter, but Siri was having none of it. She kept stepping back, surprising Lennart into silence.

"I know I promised that, baby, but...but there's nothing we can do," Astrid protested weakly, shock going through her whole body. "We searched for hours."

"You didn't look hard enough!" Siri screamed angrily. "You said daddy and Toothless have been in storms before and knew what to do! You lied to me!"

"Siri, please," Astrid said desperately, her voice choked. "I didn't know this was going to happen."

"You promised me daddy knew what to do!" Siri exclaimed angrily, ignoring her mother's desperate pleas. "I told you I was scared and you ignored me!" Siri's breathing became laboured as tears began to fill up with her sapphire blue eyes. She looked at her mother square in the face. "Thanks to you, daddy is gone! I HATE YOU!"

Gasps around rang out among the crowd who had been watching the scene in horror. Astrid staggered back as her daughter's words hit her like a dragon blast to the chest.

"Siri, please, you don't mean that."

"YES I DO!" she screamed. "I HATE YOU AND I NEVER WANT TO SPEAK TO YOU AGAIN!"

Turning on her heel, Siri suddenly ran off through the crowd, who stood there in silent shock. Looking after his friend, Lennart looked from Astrid's shaken form, to his retreating friend.

"Siri, come back!" he yelled, before he raced off after her.

Watching her daughter's vanishing form, Astrid just stood there, shock emanating throughout her entire body. Astrid suddenly started to shake and she held out her arm to keep herself steady, but found empty air. Before she could fall though, Anna was there in a flash, and held her friend up, who was now shaking violently.

"She didn't mean it, Astrid," Anna reassured her gently, wrapping her arm around her friend. "She's just upset, she needed someone to blame. It's...It's a bit of a shock."

"But she's right," Astrid said, her tone empty. "I did promise her that. She has every right to hate me. Hiccup...Hiccup-"

The realisation that Hiccup might never come home suddenly dawned upon the young woman and before anyone could react, she suddenly collapsed, to the gasps of horror among the crowd of Vikings, emitting a cry so anguished which only further shocked those around her. None of the Vikings present had ever heard a sound so anguished and grief-stricken emit from one's mouth, especially not from this young woman.

Dropping to the ground beside her friend, despite her 7 month pregnant belly, Anna quickly took her in arms and pulled her close to her, heart clenched at the sounds of distress coming from Astrid's mouth. Astrid's form shook in her arms, as great racking sobs tore through her body, causing Anna to shake along with her.

"I'm here, Astrid, we're all here for you. It's going to be alright."

Astrid mumbled something through her sobs, causing Anna to frown in concentration as she tried to hear what her friend was saying. Breathing rapidly, Astrid repeated what she said, as if she was alone in her grief.

"...never got to tell him."

The Vikings around her all went still for a moment, looking at each other in bewilderment. What was she talking about?

"What was that, Astrid?" Anna asked anxiously.

"I never got to tell him" she repeated with a large sob that shook her body. "Hiccup is gone, and I never told him!" she added, a little louder, causing a few uneasy glances to be exchanged from those gathered. Her mother now fell to her feet beside her as well, stroking her daughter's hair back gently.

"I'm such an idiot!" Astrid sobbed in Anna's shirt.

"Astrid, why are you are an idiot?" Anna asked her worriedly. "This isn't your fault."

"You don't understand!" Astrid suddenly looked up at her, tears cascading down her face like a waterfall. Anna was startled at the amount of grief pouring out of this usually strong woman, that even the grief she showed after Siri ran away, paled in comparison to this.

'What don't we understand, Astrid?" her mother suddenly asked desperately. "What's wrong?"

Astrid was silent, except for the great racking sobs ripping from her body, and then she looked at her mother and friend, her eyes wide.

"I'm pregnant!"

\* \* \*

><p><em>Told you some of you would hate me! The thing with Siri though wasn't even a part of my original plan, but I thought that with her fear of storms and how young she is, that it's only natural that a little girl would look for someone to blame. I know I would at that age anyway. And for those who didn't pick up that Astrid was pregnant last chapter, well you know now! Hopefully some of you will have picked up why Astrid hadn't told Hiccup yet too, but if it, it will be explained :) I'm also not sure on how Skullcrusher's sense of smell works, but I sort of guessed that the storm would have probably vanished any trace of smell it had, so he couldn't find them either. He might be able too, but in this case, we'll just say he can't.<em>

\_So, next chapter will have some pretty emotional stuff happening, especially with Astrid, Siri and Valka, so be prepared. What I have written in my head so far is pretty sad with Astrid trying to come to terms with possibly being a widow and single mum, but I promise it will all be worth it in the end. And no, I do not plan on Siri hating her mother forever (like my bf was worried about lol) I'm not that nasty! \_

\_Ok, \_\_\*\*DON'T FORGET TO REVIEW! \*\*\_\_I know I post at bad times because of time differences, but I have to admit that I was a little disappointed at how little reviews I got last chapter. I'm usually not bothered, but I spent all year planning this storyline and I'd like to know what you all think about it!\_\_JUST REMEMBER THOUGH\_\_\*\*, I DO NOT TOLERATE FLAMES, BUT CONSTRUCTIVE CRITISISM IS ACCEPTED. I would like to thank my readers though for getting me to 204 follows though, you guys are the best! That almost made up for the lack of reviews! :D \*\*\_

\_I'm aiming for next chapter to be up by Christmas, but if not, it will be up by the end of the year. If I don't post before Christmas, I hope you all have a good Christmas if you celebrate it or any other holiday :) For the guest who keeps asking me to update, I do take it as a compliment! I just said that to say why I take so long as all. Having people wanting me to update is flattering. \_

\_Thanks for reading! :D\_

## 29. Chapter 29: Coming to terms

\_Wow, it's a miracle I'm posting today! Just a few days ago I was running so far behind and had writer's block so bad, I didn't think you'd get this chapter until next week! Lucky for me though, I ended up pulling a late night last night so I could post today, which is early Christmas Eve for me :)Plus I wanted this chapter finished, so yeah.\_

\_Alright, I'll admit it, this chapter isn't my best work :/ Especially after last chapter. But after writer's block and all that, I hope it's at least decent enough. There are still a lot of good things about this chapter, and it's still fairly emotional, but some bits are a little boring and not as good as they should be. I'm so sorry for that. I guess emotional writing isn't my strong suit.

—

\_This chapter is about everyone coming to grips with the possibility of Hiccup being dead. Because of this, Hiccup does not appear in this chapter at all, because I thought it would take away the emotional element of the chapter. This chapter is nearly 10,000 words long and yet it's split! Once I began writing this chapter, I realised I had WAY too much material to work with, so I had to change it to a 5 chapter storyline. Sorry about that! \_

\_On with the chapter!\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 29 â€" Coming to terms<span>

\* \* \*

><p>"Make sure they leave her alone. She doesn't need this right now."<p>

"I'll try, but they're being inconsiderate sots; especially after all that."

"It's \_because\_ of all that, the lass needs to be left alone."

Astrid was barely aware of what was being spoken as she was helped into a chair, and a mug of steaming hot tea placed into her hands. After her confession out in the village, questions began to fly at the Viking woman from all directions, despite her emotional state. Unable to respond to the bombardment of questions, Snotlout and Gobber had angrily deflected the Vikings queries, before escorting the overwhelmed young woman inside her parent's house, slamming the door on any more questions.

"You should try and drink that, Astrid. It will help calm your nerves."

Astrid slowly looked up from her mug to see the concerned expression of Anna staring back at her. From all around the room, she saw

identical looks of concern etched into the faces of everyone she gazed at, before cast her eyes down to the ground once more.

"What am I going to do?" she asked them quietly, her breath hitching in her throat. "I can't have this baby without him." Her voice broke, as she let out a loud sob.

Anna and the others went still for a moment as they exchanged one dejected glance to another. For a moment, nobody knew what to say, until Anna found her voice, as she looked at her Astrid's shuddering form.

"How far along are you?" she asked gently, placing an arm around the woman's shaking frame. Astrid looked up at her, her expression blank, as her eyes shone with unshed tears.

"About 6 weeks. I only found out the day...the day before Hiccup left." Her voice was still shaky as she spoke.

Anna frowned thoughtfully. "Is that why you haven't told Hiccup yet?"

Astrid shook her head mutely. "When I found out, I was surprised," she said, a slight smile appearing on her lips, before it quickly vanished. "Hiccup and I never planned on having any more kids, but we were open to them." She looked up at Anna's expanding belly with bright eyes. "Sort of like you and Snotlout I guess," she said with a swift chuckle, resulting in a snort from Snotlout behind her. Astrid's face fell again. "When I found out, I thought it would be a great surprise for our anniversary, so I kept it quiet from everyone. But now..." Astrid suddenly shook her head angrily as she glanced around at everyone. "...now Hiccup is gone, and I never told him! I'm such an idiot! Why in Thor's name was I so stupid?!"

"You're not stupid, sweetheart," Ansfrida interjected sternly as she sat beside her daughter. "You didn't know this was going to happen."

"I still should have told him!" Astrid exclaimed angrily. "I have should have known better than to keep it a secret from him, and now our baby will never know its father! I am such an idiot!"

Dissolving into tears once more, Astrid found herself burying her head into her mother's chest, something she hadn't done in years. Evidently Ansfrida thought the same, and for a moment, she stiffened in surprise, before wrapping her arms around her daughter's shaking form and pulling her closer to her.

"It's going to be alright, sweetheart," her mother reassured her gently. "We'll help you get through this."

"I should have told him before he left," Astrid sobbed, her shoulders heaving. "At least he would have known!"

"It wouldn't have changed anything, Astrid," Amund said gently, as he sat beside his wife, reaching out to take his daughter's hand. "Hiccup still would have left when he did."

"Maybe even earlier," Valka said quietly from her place nearby, maybe everyone jump. No one had heard the older woman speak since they had

got back and even now her voice was so quiet, it was a struggle to hear her. Hearing her mother-in-law's voice, Astrid swiftly looked up to see Valka's tear strained face.

"Astrid, if Hiccup had known, he would have taken more risks to get home," Valka continued, her voice expressionless. "You can't blame yourself for this, we...we don't know what would have happened." Sniffing loudly, the dragon woman blinked furiously and looked up towards the ceiling to stop the tears in her eyes from escaping. Seeing this, Astrid held out a hand to her, the same time as Gobber did, his own face filled with shock.

"You can't change anything that's happened, lass," Gobber said miserably. "Even if you had told him, you don't know if it would have changed anything."

"What change, Uncie Gobber?"

Astrid's heart shuddered as she heard her son's voice. Turning her head toward the stairs, she saw her little boy hop off the top step from the bedroom, where he had been napping, blissfully ignorant of the whole situation since her arrival. Seeing his innocent expression as he wandered over to her, though, Astrid's throat constricted at the thought of telling her baby boy that he may never see his daddy again.

"H...Hi, baby," Astrid said gently as she watched her son bounce down the stairs. Looking up from his position on the bottom step, Leif's face lit up as he saw his mother.

"Mummy!" he shouted excitedly, as he rushed over to her. "You back! You find daddy?"

Astrid stiffened as her son quickly looked around the room, as if expecting his daddy to pop up out of a corner. Around the room, everyone else's hearts skipped a beat seeing the little boy's expectant look.

"D...Daddy isn't here, sweetie," Astrid said softly, her heart hammering a million miles an hour. "We...We couldn't find him."

The little boy frowned, confusion evident upon his face.

"What you mean?" he asked his mother, his emerald green eyes wide with worry. "Where is daddy?"

Biting her lip to stop the tears filling her eyes from escaping, Astrid reached out to take a hold of her son's hands which began to tremble within her own. The tension in the room was increasing as everyone began to look at each other, anxiety clear on each of their expressions.

"We don't know, baby," Astrid replied, struggling to keep her voice stable. "We...we couldn't find him. He got caught in the storm..." She trailed off as her eyes started to burn. Choking back tears, she sniffed loudly before looking back towards her son. "...and we think the storm sent him very far away."

"What you mean?" Leif asked timidly.

"She means we can't find daddy, darling," Valka explained softly, as she sat down in front of her grandson. "We searched for a very long time, but we...we couldn't find them"

Leif's brows furrowed as he looked at his mother. "What that mean, mummy?" he asked again. "Where is daddy?"

"We couldn't find him, lad," Gobber told him gently, as he bent down in front of the toddler. "The storm took him very far away."

"When he be back?"

"He...He isn't coming back, baby," Astrid said, her voice cracking as she spoke. "Daddy is..." As her breathing began to become shaky, she closed her eyes and sniffed loudly. As she opened them again, her heart plummeted as she saw the look of sadness creep across her son's face. She squeezed his hand tightly. "Daddy is gone, sweetie. He may never come back."

Leif's face fell. As he gazed up at his mother in shock, Astrid's brought a hand to her mouth in a sob as she watched her son's bright green eyes fill with tears. As he looked around the room, her chest constricted tighter as he began to shake his head violently.

"NO!" he screamed loudly, causing everyone to jump. "NO! Daddy is fine! He come back!"

"Baby-" Astrid choked out.

"NO!" he screamed again, as tears cascading down his flushed cheeks. "You lying, mummy!" The three year old looked around the room again, as if Hiccup could still pop out from behind something. "I want daddy!" His eyes fell on the door, and before anybody could move, Leif had rushed over to the door and wrenched it open with a jump, before racing out, yelling "DADDY!"

"Leif!" Astrid screamed tearfully, as she moved to rush after him, only to be stopped by Snotlout.

"I've got him," he said, shaken, before he raced off out the door after the toddler, Anna following close behind him. As the door slammed behind them, Astrid burst into tears.

"What did I expect having to tell a \_three year old \_that?!" she screamed. "Leif should never have had to hear those words, and now look at him! And Siri..." Shoulders shaking from the sobs racking her body, she looked at her mother, misery flowing through her whole body. "Why did I have to tell my children that?" she asked her mother.

"Because the gods are punishing me," Valka suddenly answered quietly, tears falling unchecked down her face. "They're punishing me for leaving my son for all those years. They already took Stoick away from me, and now they took Hiccup. It's the only explanation." She made a sound of distress deep in her throat, before sniffing. "I should have known they would punish me," she said, before looking towards her daughter-in-law's shocked expression. "I just wish they'd kept you out of it."

Wiping at the tears flowing down her own cheeks, Astrid quickly took

hold of her mother-in-laws' hand tightly. "This is not your fault, Val," she said sadly. "What happened to Stoick was a tragic accident and this..." she faltered a little, before continuing on, "...this isn't your fault, either."

Valka looked at Astrid, her expression unreadable as she squeezed her hand back. "It is my fault," she said. "There's no other reason why I would lose my husband and my son within 11 years if I wasn't being punished." Valka let go of Astrid's hand and stood up. "No. The gods are punishing me for staying away all those years. I should have known this would happen. And now..." Valka looked up as more tears spilled from her eyes. "And now, I've lost my son."

"Val-"

"Excuse me," Valka said quickly, before she followed Leif's lead and quickly rushed out the door. Gobber stared after her for a moment, before he too took off after her.

"Val!" he yelled, before the door slammed behind them once more.

The room was silent as the echoes of the slammed door began to fade, identical feelings of shock and grief pulsed through the household. Overwhelmed with grief, Astrid buried her head in her hands, trying to block out the images of her son's devastated expression from entering her mind.

"Maybe you should go to bed, sweetheart?" her mother suggested gently. "It might make you feel better."

Astrid looked up, her vision blurred with tears. Blinking them away, she saw her parent's concerned expressions, and she sighed.

"I doubt even sleep will bring Hiccup back," she said, her tone flat.

Ansfrida sighed sadly. "No, it won't. But you can't face this in your condition either."

"I doubt I could face it fully awake," Astrid said quietly, before she sighed again. "And I don't think I could sleep with the kids like they are."

"The kids will be back when they're ready, sweetie," Amund said softly. "They're in good hands."

"But-" Astrid started, before she suddenly realised she had no energy to argue. As dusk fell, the young woman suddenly felt her energy start to ebb away, and as it did, she felt her muscles begin to feel heavy. Realising this, she finally nodded, and stood up.

"You'll wake me if the kids come back?" she asked.

"If they need you, yes, we will."

Nodding, Astrid slowly climbed the steps up to her old room. Reaching the top, she mindlessly began to make her way over to the wooden bed, before she suddenly stopped at the sight of something on the table beside it. Picking it up, her breathing suddenly hitched in her throat as she gazed upon an old drawing Hiccup had done of her before



they were married. She didn't realise she'd left it there. Clutching it close to her, she slowly lay down on the bed, and pulled the blanket up to her chin, feeling the coldness of her locket on her chest as she moved. Taking the trinket out of the shirt, she looked down upon the writing, and her stomach squeezed tight as she scanned her eyes over the engraving.

\_Min\_ \_Sanne Elsker\_

Tears began to fill her eyes before she could stop them, and as she lay there sobbing, she clutched the necklace to her tightly, not daring to let go. After what felt like hours, lying there in her own sorrow, the young woman finally fell asleep.

\* \* \*

><p>"Siri!"<p>

Lennart cast his eyes around the trees surrounding him, looking for any sign of his upset friend. Having run off a little while ago, the 9 year olds stomach was beginning to fill with butterflies, as place after place came up empty. For someone who had run after her with barely a moment's thought, he was sure having a hard time finding her! As a funny feeling began to fill his gut, the young boy suddenly stopped in his tracks.

"The cove!" he said, as the thought struck him. Turning on his heels, the boy rushed back into the direction in which he'd come from, ducking under trees as he did so, before reaching the cavern a little way from the village. He hopped down the rock ledge, and began to scan the area for his friend.

It didn't take long. As he entered, Lennart immediately spotted the golden haired girl standing by the water's edge, angrily throwing rocks and other objects into the water, with such ferocity that they bounced on the water, before suddenly sinking. As she launched these projectiles, Lennart heard her screaming things on the top of her lungs, which made his stomach flip sadly, as the words became comprehensible.

"I hate her!" she was screaming angrily, launching yet another object into the water. It bounced off the surface of the water, before landing with a loud splash into the murky depths of the pond. "She promised to find him and she didn't!" She threw another rock, but it missed the water, and bounced up in the air, making her growl in anger. She bent to pick it up. "SHE LIED TO ME!" she yelled, arm going back to throw it again.

"S...Siri?" Lennart said nervously, as he cautiously approached her. Hearing her friend's voice, Siri suddenly whipped around, rock still in hand. Realising who it was, she quickly dropped it, but her face remained angry as she looked at him.

"Go away, Lennie," she said furiously. "I don't want to talk."

"Siri-"

"No!" she screamed. "I don't want to talk about it! My daddy is gone, and it's all my mummy's fault!" She quickly picked up another rock

and pitched it into the deep pond. "I hate her!"

"Siri, that's mean," Lennart said, as he nervously stepped forward to take a rock out of Siri's clenched hand. "You don't hate her."

"Yes I do!" she screamed at him, her eyes flashing in anger. "She promised me he would be okay! She lied to me, Lennie!"

"Siri, did you see your mummy's face when you said you hated her?" Lennart asked her sadly, as he took her hand in his warily. "She was really sad."

"I don't care!" Siri said, although the tears in her eyes betrayed her. "I told mummy I was worried for daddy, and she didn't listen! Now...Now my daddy's gone, and it's all her fault!"

"No it isn't," Lennart said, his brows furrowing. "It was the storms-"

"Which mum said he'd be safe from," Siri retorted bitterly. "She promised not to come home until she found them and now daddy..." Siri's lip quivered, "...daddy is gone." She focussed her bright blue eyes on her friend as tears began to build up in her eyes "I hate her, Lennie."

Lennart sighed sadly. "You don't hate her, Seer."

"Yes I do! She promised me daddy would be okay," she said, her voice cracking as she spoke. Gazing towards her friend, Lennart's stomach jumped as he saw tears beginning to fill her sapphire blue eyes. "She came home without him." Sniffling loudly, she reached out to wipe her eyes as tears threatened to fall. "Daddy and Toothless are gone, Lennie. And my mum-"

"-is sad too, Seer," Lennart said gently, as he wrapped an arm around her shoulders warily. "I saw the look on her face when you said you hated her. She was really upset." Siri made a small noise in her throat which Lennart took to be a sob. "Your mummy needs you, Siri. She loved your daddy as much as you and she's going to be really upset. She's probably crying right now."

"But she promised..." Siri protested weakly, tears beginning to spill from her eyes.

"My mummy says that not all promises can be kept," Lennart said sensibly. "Trying to keep them is better than not keeping them, though, and your mummy tried very hard to find your daddy. She just...couldn't."

Siri was silent as she took in her friend's words. Casting her eyes down to the ground, she suddenly felt her stomach clench tight, and before she could stop them, the dam behind her eyelids burst and broke free, and she flung her arms around her best friend, burying her head into his shoulder.

"I want my daddy," Siri wept, as she tightened her grip around the boy's waist. Lennart stiffened slightly, but very slowly, he raised his arms and wrapped them around her small form, hugging her tightly as she cried. "I'm never going to see him again."

"I know, Siri," Lennart said gently, wincing slightly as he felt his friend's tears hit his shirt. "It'll be okay."

"No it won't," Siri said, her voice squeaking slightly. "I'll never see my daddy again. How is that okay, Len?"

"I don't know," Lennart admitted with a sad sigh. "But you can come over anytime you're sad, Seer," he added with a smile. "I'll help you, and so will my mummy and daddy. I won't let you be sad."

Siri sniffed and turned her gaze up to her friend, a small giggle escaping her lips despite herself. "Thanks Lennie, you're awesome."

"I know," he grinned, causing Siri's eyebrows to shoot up in surprise.

"Um, Lennart, you sound like \_your \_daddy."

Lennart gave her a sheepish grin. "Oops, sorry."

Siri emitted a small snort, before her eyes suddenly glazed over again. Looking around the cove, her eyes rested on a small tree that her and Hiccup used to play under from time to time. Following her line of sight, Lennart quickly took her hand in his, and started to pull her away. Feeling the motion, Siri tore her gaze away from it, as a sob began to build in her throat once more.

"Daddy will never take me here again," she choked out. "Or Leif."

Unsure of what to say, Lennart just continued to pull her along, before at last he found his voice.

"Do you want to take you home, Seer?"

Sniffling loudly, the little girl nodded, clutching her friend's hand tightly. "I want my mummy," she said tearfully.

"Okay," Lennart said kindly. "I'll take you home. Our parents will probably be worried now anyway."

\* \* \*

><p>"Do you think we should go look for them? It's getting late."<p>

"They'll be fine. Len and Siri know their way around the island."

"Your concern for them astounds me."

"What?" Snotlout said defensively. "It's true."

"Yeah, but Siri was pretty upset earlier. She shouldn't be out there," Anna said worriedly. Looking around, she suddenly frowned. "Speaking of upset, where's Leif?"

"I took him over to Kelda's. It was the only way he'd calm down," Snotlout said with a sigh. "Seriously, it's crap that a 3 year old

has to go through this. And did you see the look on Astrid's face earlier? I've never seen her look like that."

"You and me both," Anna said bitterly, as she crossed her arms in a huff. "No one should have to go through this; especially not by a storm of all things!"

"There's still a chance that Hiccup's out there," Snotlout said hopefully.

"You really think so?" Anna asked him miserably. She heaved a deep sigh. "And what's worse is that now Astrid is going to be having a baby without him. I don't know about her, but I couldn't do it." She looked out past the houses, eyebrows creased with concern as the darkness fell upon the village. "It's getting late," she said worriedly.

"Want me to go look for them?" Snotlout asked her. Anna turned towards him with a tentative expression, before turning back towards the village square, eyes squinting in the darkness. Opening her mouth to reply, she suddenly squinted again at a few figures approaching in the darkness of the square. As they came closer, she gave a sigh of relief.

"No need," she said, nodding towards the two figures. "There they are."

Turning his head at his mother's voice, Lennart's face broke into a small smile as he noticed her anxious expression. Gesturing to the silent form of his friend beside him, Lennart answered his mother's wordless question before she had even spoken it.

"We were at the cove," Lennart said with a glance towards Siri. "We didn't know we were so late."

"It's fine, sweetie, we just didn't know where you were, that's all," Anna said, before she placed a caring hand upon Siri's face. "Are you ok, honey?" she asked her gently.

Siri looked up at Anna with a small smile. "I'm ok," she said quietly. "I just...needed some time for myself." She looked around the area. "Is mum here?" she asked.

"She's at your grandparent's house, Seer," Anna answered carefully. "She...she went to tell your brother about...about what happened."

At these words, a lump formed in Siri's throat, her eyes widening in concern. Swallowing to dislodge the ball, Siri looked from Anna to Snotlout; a nervous expression forming on her face.

"How...how did he take it?" she asked, the lump in her throat making it difficult to speak.

Anna sighed, before pulling the little girl closer to her. "He didn't take it too well, sweetie," she admitted sadly. "We explained it as easy as we could, but he doesn't seem to believe it. He...he called your mum a liar and ran off. He was running around the village calling for your daddy. He's over at Kelda's right now."

"And...my mum?"

"She's pretty upset," Anna said with a sad smile, as she knelt down in front of the 9 year old. "I don't think she expected you or Leif to react like that."

Siri opened her mouth to respond, only to quickly snap it shut again as her lip started to tremble, tears beginning to fill her eyes. Before Anna could react, Siri had thrown herself into the woman's arms, sobs escaping her mouth in loud gasps; her whole body trembling as she clutched to Anna.

"I didn't mean it, Aunt Anna!" she sobbed loudly. "I don't hate her, I really don't!" She sniffled loudly, as she buried her head into Anna's shirt. "I was just mad," she said, as she lifted her tear filled eyes up to meet Anna's. "I didn't mean it, honestly-"

"Shh..." Anna said softly, bringing a hand up to stroke the 9 year olds curls. "I know you didn't, sweetie. It's okay."

Unable to answer, Siri just clung tighter to the young woman, as sobs continue to rip through her body, her breathing rapid. Seeing his friend in such distress, Lennart nervously moved forward and placed a cautious hand on her shoulder, earning him a small smile from his mother, as she continued to soothe the young girl as she continued to cry. Feeling uncertain as to what he should do, Snotlout slowly moved backwards towards the house, when Siri finally looked up from Anna's shirt. Her eyes were puffy and red, and tears were still flowing down her cheeks, but her breathing had eased slightly, and as she looked up, she sniffed loudly and wiped a hand over her cheeks.

"Can I see mum?"

"Of course you can," Anna said gently. "Once we get Leif, I'll take you over, ok?"

"Ok," Siri said quietly. "I'll...I'll help you explain to Leif if you want. He might listen to me."

\* \* \*

><p>"WHERE, DADDY? I WANT MY DADDY!"<p>

"I'm sorry Anna, it's my fault," Siri could hear Fishlegs saying from the couch. "If I'd just left him to play-"

"It's not your fault, Fishlegs; you didn't know Leif would react like that."

"I reminded him of his daddy, though," Fishlegs said, his face mortified. "I should have known Kelda would say 'daddy' when I said it was dinnertime."

"DADDDDDDY!"

Siri stood shock still as she watched her brother scream at the top of his lungs in the middle of the room. She had no idea what she'd expected once she'd entered the Ingerman home, but this wasn't it. As soon as she had entered the house, she had heard her brother's

heartbreaking screams for their daddy, his auburn bangs clinging to his wet face, as he sobbed and screamed at the top of his lungs. Kelda, who had been playing with him just moments before, was sitting where she was, blue eyes wide with shock at seeing her friend's hysterical tantrum.

"I WANT MY DADDY!"

Suddenly snapping back to the present, Siri quickly moved from her place, and made her way over to her brother, just as Ruffnut began to make her way over from the kitchen table. Seeing the little girl approach, though, Ruffnut stopped where she stood, scooping up her daughter from the floor, in order to give them some space. Seeing his sister approach, Leif's tear filled eyes suddenly widened, before he got up and raced over to her, almost knocking her flat as he flung his arms around her legs.

"SIRI, WHERE DADDY?!" Leif screamed desperately, as he held onto Siri's legs tightly. He pointed towards the others with a frown. "THEY LIE AND SAY DADDY NOT HERE. WHERE DADDY!"

"Dad...daddy's not here, Leif," Siri replied shakily, bending down to see eye level with her brother. "Auntie Ruffnut and Uncle Fishlegs are...right."

"YOU LYING!" Leif screamed again, his face turning a bright shade of purple. "MUMMY SAID SHE BRING DADDY BACK! I WANT DADDY!"

"Leify, listen to me-"

"NO! I WANT DADDY!"

"LEIF!" Siri yelled desperately, as she placed her hands on his arms to stop him from running off. Hearing his sister's yell, Leif suddenly went silent and stared open mouthed at her as he saw her eyes fill with tears.

"Leify, listen to me," Siri said thickly, blue eyes gazing into green. "We aren't lying to you. Daddy..." trailing off for a moment, Siri took a deep breath, before she continued. "Daddy was caught by that scary storm the other day, and it's sent him very far away."

Leif's lip quivered, before he answered, "How far?"

Siri lowered her eyes from her little brother's, blinking furiously at the tears that were taking up residence there. She couldn't cry yet. Her brother had to understand. Taking a shaky breath, she lifted her gaze to Leif's again and felt her stomach flutter at the fear filling his own emerald orbs.

"Very far, Leif," Siri answered miserably. "Daddy...Daddy isn't coming back." Watching the toddler's eyes filled with tears, Siri bit her lip, before pulling him closer to her. "Mummy searched for a long time for him, but they only found Toothless's tail. He's...he's gone."

"Toofas gone too?" Leif asked, his eyes widening even more.

Siri nodded as a sob escaped her throat. Moving her restraining hands

from his arms to gently clasping her brother's hands, she gripped them tightly, as the little boy suddenly went rigid at his sister's distress. Looking at him, as tears flowed down her cheeks, Siri nodded again.

"Toothless too."

Leif's eyes quickly filled with tears, as understanding finally hit the 3 year old. As his lip began to quiver, big fat tears began to roll down his face, which had begun to redden in distress. As Siri began to look around for help from the adults, she was startled as her little brother suddenly burst into tears, flinging himself into his sister's arms, arms tight around her neck.

"I want daddy," he sobbed into her shoulder.

"I do too, Leif," Siri said, as her own lip began to quiver. "But he's-"

She didn't get to finish. As her throat began to tighten, tears burned her eyes and the next thing she knew, she too had burst into a wave of tears. Standing up from their places at the table, Anna and Ruffnut quickly rushed over the two children and dropped to their knees beside them, both of them taking a child into their arms, hearts heavy at the sight. Over at the table, Fishlegs looked away, tears filling his own eyes, as he took his 4 year old daughter into his lap, as she gazed at the scene, eyes wide with sadness themselves.

"Shh...I'm here, sweetie, I'm here," Anna soothed gently, rocking the little girl back and forth. Next to her Ruffnut was trying her best to soothe the toddler, whose loud sobs were shattering at her own heart, as she stroked the messy auburn locks as carefully as she could.

"I want to see mummy," Siri said after awhile, emitting a loud sniff as she looked up at Anna.

"I'll take you now, honey," Anna said gently, "come on."

Siri sniffed again, and as she got up, she looked back down at her brother in Ruffnut's arms. His face was tear streaked, and his eyes were red, but in his waves of misery the little boy had somehow managed to cry himself to sleep, exhaustion overtaking his body in his grief.

"Will he be ok?" she asked worriedly, her eyes focused on her slumbering brother.

"He'll be fine, Seer," Ruffnut said softly, although she frowned at the position she was locked in. "He can stay with Kelda tonight if he wants." She turned her gaze to Fishlegs over by the table. "Is that alright, Legs?"

"Of course it is," Fishlegs said sadly. "As long as Kelda is ok with it." He looked down at the little girl with a small smile. "Do you want to have Leif here tonight, sweetie?"

Kelda nodded solemnly. "Yes daddy," she said quietly. "I'll play with him."

Anna nodded at them. "Thanks for this," she said gratefully. "It might be better for him anyway. I'm taking Siri to Astrid, though, and if she asks for Leif, I'll take him over."

"He'll be fine here," Fishlegs said.

"Alright." Placing an arm around Siri's shoulders, Anna gently led her to the door, where Siri turned to give the Ingerman family a tiny smile, before following Anna out the door, a small yawn escaping her despite herself. It was fully dark now, with the moon low in the sky. Realising the hour, Anna quickly urged Siri along towards her grandparents' house, where to Anna's irritation, a small group of Vikings were located outside, all of them speaking in low fearful voices. Seeing the two of them approach, they quickly rushed over to them, all of them talking at once.

"What's going on with Astrid?"

"What's going to happen now?"

"Is she alright?"

"Enough!" Anna exclaimed loudly. "Can't you just leave Astrid alone? She's upset enough as it is."

"But what's going to happen now?"

Anna growled in annoyance as the crowd continued to talk, completely ignoring her pleas for privacy. If it was one thing Vikings were annoyingly good at, it was their thirst for information, and right now, they were being extremely stubborn about it, as they crowded around the pair of them, asking question after question at the both of them.

"Oh, for Thors sake!" Anna said angrily, "can't you all just go away? Siri wants to see her mother..." Looking down at the little girl in question, Anna saw, Siri, uncomfortable with everyone around her, clinging to her arm, trying to hide behind her to avoid the Vikings attentions.

"Oi! Lay off you inconsiderate sots!" came Snotlout's booming voice from behind them. Turning around, Anna sighed in relief as she saw Snotlout approaching them, irritation clearly evident upon his features. As he reached the small Viking mob, they fell silent suddenly.

"Why don't you all just piss off?" Snotlout growled angrily. "Astrid has enough to deal with without you lot bugging her like this-"

"But...what's going to happen?-" one Viking started before he quickly shut up after the dangerous look he was given.

"I know you all want to know that, but do you really think bugging someone who has possibly just became a widow is going to get you anywhere?!" Looking around at the crowd, Snotlout saw the looks of uncertainty upon their faces, and he nodded. "I didn't think so" he said. "Now, get out of here, and let Siri see her mother!"



With a few anxious sighs and mumbles, the mob of Vikings slowly despatched themselves from their places around the house, and began to wonder off home. Breathing a sigh of relief, Anna gave her husband a grateful smile, before giving him a peck on the cheek.

"Thank Odin for that," she said, with a frown in the crowd's direction. "How rude is this village that they would pester someone for information like that?" Shaking her head in disbelief, Anna suddenly gave Snotlout an amused look. "Since when do you step in to help someone like that? You're usually the one starting it."

Snotlout snorted. "Ordinarily, that's true," he said with an unembarrassed shrug. "But even I can't stand\_ that\_." He looked down at Siri, who was standing there silent, staring after the crowd. "They won't bug her again tonight, Seer, I promise" Snotlout reassured her.

Siri looked up at him, confusion crossing her face. "Why are they doing that?" she asked. "They know...they know daddy is gone." She blinked as she felt tears behind her eyelids once more.

"They're being nosy, that's all," Anna replied in annoyance, before they suddenly jumped at the sound of the door of the house opening.

"Siri," Ansfrida said in relief, as she looked out to see her granddaughter standing on the doorstep. "We were getting worried." Bending down, she held out her arms for the little girl, which Siri immediately ran into, hugging her grandmother tight. Looking up at Anna and Snotlout, she gave them an appreciative nod. "Thanks for that," she said. "But we can't stall them forever."

"We can until Astrid is up for it," Snotlout said, cracking his knuckles as he looked towards where the crowd had headed. "They can just wait."

"Vikings waiting, now there's a challenge," Amund said dryly, as he came to the door. "But thanks anyway."

Snotlout and Anna nodded, before they gave Siri a small smile and headed off towards their own house. As Amund shut the door behind them, Siri looked up from her grandmother's embrace and scanned her eyes around the room.

"Where's mum?" she asked. "I...I have to say sorry to her. I didn't mean what I said."

"I know you didn't, dear," Ansfrida said softly. "But she's upstairs, asleep. You won't able to say it tonight."

Siri looked down at the floor sadly, before she looked up towards the room where her mum was. "Can I go up anyway?" she asked hopefully. "I won't wake her, I promise" she added as her grandparents exchanged a nervous look. As Siri said that, Ansfrida frowned thoughtfully, before she nodded.

"Alright, you can go up," she said. Looking around the room, her eyes spotted the little Nadder doll on the floor, which she quickly picked up and handed to her granddaughter. "Both of you could use the

company anyway," Ansfrida added with a long sigh. "Will you be alright for tonight, sweetie?"

Siri nodded, as she took her doll in her hands. "I'm ok," she said quietly. "I just want my mummy."

"Alright then, head on up," Amund said, giving her a quick kiss on the cheek, before Siri slowly climbed the steps to the upstairs level. Upon approaching the bedroom, she hesitated for a moment, before she took hold of the door handle and carefully pushed it open, blinking her eyes as they took in the darkness of the room. Squinting slightly, Siri's eyes quickly adjusted to the dimness of the room and noticed the only source of light in the room was a waxing candle on the bedside table. Cautiously entering the room, she tip toed across to the bed, and saw her mother curled up in on herself, blonde hair loose and flowing around her tear streaked face. Siri's stomach dropped. She had never seen her mother this way before, and the sight of it made her eyes burn and her throat tighten as she wondered around to the other side of the bed, before quietly slipping in the bed beside her mother.

Siri froze as her mother shifted slightly from beside her, but didn't wake up. Casting her eyes around the area for a blanket, her eyes quickly located one on the floor, where she herself had left it last night. Picking it up, she cautiously shook it out, before she threw it over herself and her mother. As she did so, Astrid seemed to relax ever so slightly, as if it were a comfort to her. Smiling slightly to herself, Siri lay down on the little bit of space on the pillow and hugged Sky to herself as she moved closer to the proximity of her mother. Even if she couldn't say sorry to her mother just yet, she could at least show that she hadn't meant what she said. Yawning slightly as exhaustion began to wash through her, all thoughts of the day began to drift away as sleep finally consumed her, her body relaxing into sleep, curled up beside her mother.

\* \* \*

><p>Astrid awoke in the middle of the night, her restless dreams preventing her from falling back to sleep. Glancing around the room, her eyes adjusted to the darkness to see the moon was still fairly high in the sky, showing it was still the middle of the night. Closing her heavy eyes with a drawn out sigh, Astrid shifted slightly from where she lay. She froze as she felt something leaning against her.<p>

Startled, Astrid whipped her body around, only for her breath to catch at the sight before her. There, lying beside her was Siri, snuggled up against her side, Sky held firmly in her arms, her legs curled up around her. Her hair was escaping its braid and was plastered all over her face, where her eyes and cheeks were slightly red from crying. Despite all this, she looked quite peaceful as she slept, having not interrupted by her mother's movement.

Astrid's eyes began to burn slightly as she looked down at her daughter's sleeping form, before she lowered a gentle hand upon the little girl's blonde head, gently brushing the hair away from her face. The 9 year old didn't move a muscle. She hadn't either felt or heard her daughter's enter the room, but it looked like it had been a few hours at the most as took in the little girl's peaceful form. Bending down, Astrid gently brushed her lips against her daughter's

forehead in gentle kiss before pulling her closer, as tears escaped her eyes. As she placed an arm around her daughter, Astrid could feel some of the tension deep within her fade, as she held her daughter close to her. As her body began to relax slightly, Astrid could feel her eyelids become heavy, and keeping an arm wrapped around her daughter's waist, sleep overtook her once more, and before long, her breathing fell back into a gently rhythm.

Siri slowly opened her eyes as she heard her mother's breathing fall back into a regular pattern. Smiling slightly, Siri carefully sat up to give her mother s gentle kiss on the cheek, before laying down in her embrace once more, eyes overcome with fatigue. Closing her eyes, Siri allowed for sleep to overcome her once more, and within moments, joined her mother in slumber.

\* \* \*

><p>"OH, FOR THORS SAKE, DON'T YOU PEOPLE HAVE ANYTHING BETTER TO DO!"<p>

Astrid awoke with a start at the sound of loud yelling from downstairs. Heart thumping loudly, the Viking woman cast her gaze around the room, still dazed from sleep, and a little unsure of where she was - that is, until she felt Siri against her and a bitter ray of sunshine dully illuminating the room. As her brain caught up to her body though, the memories of the previous day came flooding back and her heart shuddered in her chest as she sat up, eyes blurring with tears.

Astrid frowned as she heard the voices once more. Leaning forward slightly, she had to strain to hear the voices as they began to talk anew.

"I know it's bad timing, Ansfrida, but we have to know what's going to happen now."

"And you can't wait another few days?" her mother answered bitterly. "Astrid has just lost her\_ husband\_."

"And we've lost our Chief," the other Viking answered, his voice low. "I know it's a bad time, but we have a village confused about what's going to happen now."

Astrid stopped listening by this time, as a fresh wave of tears rolled down her cheeks. Turning her head away from the door, she lay back down, stifling a sob that threatened to escape so as not to wake her daughter. \_Of course, \_she thought, \_things would have to be settled as soon as possible before the village goes crazy. \_Curling into a ball though, Astrid squeezed her eyes shut, trying to block out the knowledge that they would have to talk about the affairs of the village, silent sobs shaking her form. How could she face the fact that Hiccup really was gone?

"I DON'T CARE WHAT THE VILLAGE THINKS, MY DAUGHTER IS DEVASTATED, AND THAT'S ALL I CARE ABOUT!"

Astrid winced as she heard her mother's screams, before she suddenly heard a sleepy moan from beside her. Quickly wiping at the wetness on her face, Astrid sat up and turned around, just as Siri's eyes slowly fluttered open, her brows furrowed in

bewilderment.

"Wha...whazgoingin?" she asked groggily, as she looked towards the sound. "Who's yelling?"

"Don't worry about it, baby, go back to sleep," Astrid replied gently, but she and Siri both jumped as they heard Amund now join the shouting match.

"WHY DON'T YOU JUST WAIT UNTIL SHE'S READY?!"

Realisation crossed Siri's eyes as to what the yelling was about and she frowned as she looked up at her mother.

"Are the others annoying us again?" she asked. "But Uncle Snotlout said he'd keep them away."

Astrid sighed. "Even Snotlout can't keep that lot away," she said. "They just want to know what's...what's going to happen now, is all." Astrid blinked furiously trying to stop the tears in her eyes, but failed as a few slipped from her eyes. Looking at her mother forlornly, Siri scooted closer to her and wrapped her arms around her mother's waist. Sniffling loudly, Astrid returned the embrace, before placing a kiss into her daughter's messy locks.

"Mummy?" Siri said shakily. Looking down at her daughter, Astrid's heart constricted further seeing the devastated expression cross her face.

"Mummy, I'm sorry," she said as she emitted a sniff of her own. "I don't hate you. I...I just want daddy, that's all."

'Oh, baby, I know," Astrid said gently. "It's alright. You don't have to apologise." She sighed loudly. "I want daddy too."

Siri made a sad noise, before Astrid suddenly tensed in anger as the voices below suddenly became louder.

"YOU THINK ASTRID IS READY FOR THIS?!"

"That's it," Astrid hissed angrily, as she got out of bed. "I'm over it."

"What are you going to do, mum?" Siri asked nervously, as she sat up on the bed, eyes widening with concern as she hugged the Nadder doll close to her.

"Put an end to this," Astrid said angrily. "If they want to call a meeting, they can do it without me." And without further ado, she wrenched open the bedroom door and went down the stairs, eyes blazing as she saw the small group of Vikings, all council members she noted, gathered at the door.

"Do you mind?" Siri heard her mother say furiously. "My daughter is upstairs, and doesn't need to hear this crap!"

"Astrid," Hagan, the head of the council said. "I know how hard it is for you right now-"

"Do you? How kind of you," Astrid answered sarcastically, arms folded

as she stood in front of the older Viking.

"Astrid, we're all feeling the loss," Sven, another council member said with a sigh. "But we have to talk about what's going to happen now; for the sake of the village."

"And you think I'm up for this right now?!" Astrid said furiously, her voice breaking as she spoke. "If you want to hold a meeting, go right ahead, but I'm not going." She turned to go back upstairs as her self-control began to fade.

"Astrid..." Hagan said softly. "You know as well as I do that we have to open Hiccup's documents; with you there. You think it was easy for Hiccup to open his father's the day he became Chief? This is hard on all of us, but it has to be done. You know that."

Astrid stopped, one foot on the step, as she processed Hagan's words. Closing her eyes against the emotions fighting to push themselves out of her body, she stayed silent for a moment, with the only sounds being the ragged breathing of those around her. Finally, she turned around.

"Call the council," she said, her tone flat. "I'll be there soon."

"Astrid, you don't have to do this-" her father started.

"He's right," Astrid said. "We have to do this at some point, might as well do it today." She looked at the village outside the door. "It's not like waiting will make things better."

Siri, Amund and Ansfrida all looked at each other in concern as Astrid made to follow the council, before she suddenly stopped and turned around, her eyes wide.

"Where's my son?" she asked in a panic. "Where's Leif?"

"He's at Kelda's, mum," Siri said quickly, running over to her to engulf her mother in a tight hug. "He's...he's alright, just upset."

"And does he-?"

"Understand?" Siri finished for her. She nodded miserably. "Yes."

"I have to see him first," she said frantically, as she went to go to the Ingerman house, but was stopped by Fishlegs himself who was had showed up with Ruffnut.

"He's still asleep," Fishlegs told her. "He had a rough night. He's alright though. He's with Annika and the other kids."

"I'll see him after the meeting then," Astrid said slowly, before she looked up towards the Great Hall with an anxious expression. Taking a deep breath, she turned her gaze towards the rest of the council. "Come on, let's get this over with," she said quietly. "Before I change my mind."

\* \* \*

><p>"This meeting will now come to order."<p>

Astrid didn't meet the gazes of any of the Vikings present in the hall as she sat down. Everyone was looking at her sympathetically, and it was making her stomach boil to the point that she had to bite her lip to stop herself from saying something she'd regret. Beside her sat Valka, who was as pale as she had been the day before, and her eyes showed that she hadn't slept all night either. Reaching for her mother-in-law's hand, Valka managed to give Astrid a tiny smile, before her face turned blank again. Seeing this, Gobber sighed, having been with the dragon woman all night with no progress whatsoever. She had just cried and stayed silent all night, even refusing to eat anything he'd served her.

Astrid looked around the faces of the other council members, most of them being her friends, and all of them looked as though they hadn't slept the night before, with dark circles hanging under their eyes, their expressions downcast. All of them looked at her as she sat down, each of them giving her small reassured smiles, through the pain etched onto their faces.

"We...we come here today to discuss Hiccup's edict documents," Hagan said, his own voice slightly shaky. "With our chief missing, presumed..." Hagan trailed off slightly, looking towards Astrid, who was looking at the table, refusing to meet the man's eyes. Seeing this, he heaved a deep sigh, and continued. "With our chief missing, presumed d...dead, it is with heavy hearts that we call this meeting to discuss the leadership of Berk..."

"Who put this jerk in charge?" Snotlout whispered angrily, as Hagan continued to speak. "Gobber's head of the council in Hiccup's absence."

"He's in charge of Berk's documents," Fishlegs said, although he too, was bitter. "He has to lead the meeting."

"Still a jerk though," Tuffnut hissed, before he was shut up by a glare from both Astrid and Valka and he winced and looked away.

"In accordance to Hiccup's wishes, if anything was to happen to him before Siri, his eldest child, came of age, it was his wish that his wife, Astrid Ansfrida Haddock would resume the position of temporary Chief until such time that Siri is of age."

Astrid didn't react to this as she kept her eyes on the table. She knew this was what Hiccup would have wanted, but she wasn't sure she could do it. She was unable to run the village today, let alone for the next several years. Could she really do it without him, she thought, and with another baby on the way too? She closed her eyes as her breathing slowly became rapid at the thought. She started slightly as she heard Hadar began to speak again.

"In accordance to Astrid, Hiccup also expressed his wish that everyone within the council, to help out in the time it would take for his family to grieve in such a situation.

Astrid sighed, a slight weight lifting on her shoulders.

"In the matters of other affairs, Hiccup also writes that if Toothless is gone along with him, that Cloudjumper assume the

position of Alpha unless another comes forward in challenge..."

Valka looked up in response for the first time at these words and looked out towards her dragon sitting sorrowfully in the middle of the hall. He, too, looked up at these words, and his eyes went wide with sadness at the thought of taking his friend's position. Astrid and the others all went still for a moment as well, tears welling up in Astrid's eyes as she remembered that Toothless was gone as well.

"It is also stated here that in the event that Astrid is a widow that all property he and her have automatically goes to her to pass down the family line, and that this arrangement will continue, even if she wishes to marry again..."

Astrid had stopped listening by this point; not by her choice, though. Everything had begun to echo like she was standing in a cave - but inside her head. Her sight became tunnel vision, and her pulse skyrocketed, every pulse near agony. Her breaths became ragged, sharp and shallow; she shook like a quivering pine in a storm. Move on? Had someone said something about moving on? "Why? Why? Why? Why do we have to move on?" she began to mumble under her breath with only Valka noticing her belaboured plea.

Astrid couldn't believe what they had said. Move on?! She wasn't having any of this. She stood bolt up, knocking her chair over behind her with an echoing BAM, and made a break for the door. She heard a multitude of voices calling out behind her, but couldn't and did not care to try to discern the voices. Stumbling briefly before she reached the doors, she threw them open and sobbing openly, descended the stairs from the Great Hall.

"Astrid!"

Astrid stopped at the bottom of the stairs, chest heaving in anger, but she didn't turn around. As she heard the person, or should she say person's approach though, her eyes darted toward their direction.

"Astrid, you have to come back, we're not done!" came Snotlout's voice from behind her.

"I'm done, though," she hissed angrily, wheeling around in anger. "I can't do this!"

"Astrid, we're all feeling the same way," said Fishlegs with a sigh. "This is hard for us too."

"Oh, really?" Astrid seethed, causing the others to take a step back in alarm. "You think you know what I going through right now? I've just lost my husband, Fishlegs!"

"Astrid, you need to calm down-"

"CALM DOWN?" she exploded. "THAT'S WHAT YOU EXPECT ME TO DO? CALM DOWN! NONE OF YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M DOING THROUGH!" Everyone looked at the young woman in shock as she exploded into rage, standing frozen and open mouthed in their positions. "I HAVE JUST LOST MY HUSBAND, AND YOU EXPECT ME TO SIT THERE AND LISTEN TO THE FACT THAT

HE REALLY IS GONE?" Astrid's whole body started to tremble so violently, that Valka, who was standing there as open mouthed as the rest of them, was sure she would collapse. "NONE OF YOU GET IT, DO YOU?" Astrid said hysterically. "YOU MAY HAVE LOST A FRIEND, BUT I LOST A HUSBAND AND THE FATHER OF MY CHILDREN! ONE OF THEM IS NOT EVEN GOING TO KNOW THEIR FATHER!" Placing a hand on her still flat stomach, Astrid's anger diminished a little, but didn't waver in any way. "I HAVE LOST MY BEST FRIEND, AND NOW I HAVE TO LIVE WITHOUT HIM!"

"Astrid-" said her mother weakly as approached them, as Astrid held out her hand towards the stairs to stop herself from collapsing.

"None of you know what I'm going through," Astrid said, her voice dropping dramatically. "I've lost someone I was supposed to spend the rest of my life with and you all expect me to be able to face it. I'm supposed to be chief, a widow \_and\_ raise a baby on my own." She snorted. "I've lost everything." Standing there in silence for a moment, Astrid suddenly turned on her heel and bolted towards her parent's house, leaving everyone in shock, except Ansfrida and Valka, who quickly raced after her.

"Astrid!"

She ignored them. Without looking back, she raced through the village, ignoring the calls of the Vikings she ran by, her vision blurred as tears swarmed her vision. Stumbling over a rock on the ground, she dragged herself up, before running on. Reaching the house, she wrenched open the door, and raced in, her breathing rapid as she raced up the stairs, before slamming the door behind her so hard, the timber shook.

Heart thumping like a drum beat in her chest; Astrid leaned against the door, sobs ripping through her body that her shaking vibrated the door behind her. Bringing a hand to her mouth, Astrid felt a wave of nausea hit her stomach, and she doubled over in a gasping sob. As she did so, she felt the weight of her locket against her chest. Sniffing loudly, she yanked the trinket from out of her shirt and gazed down upon it, her chest heaving. Her brain was whirling a million miles an hour as she looked down upon it, before her chest suddenly burned with rage.

Wrenching the locket off her neck, she stared down at it in anger as realisation suddenly hit her that Hiccup \_was never\_ going back.

"I hate you!" Astrid screamed, before she threw the metal piece of jewellery at the wall. It ricocheted off the timbered walls, before hitting the wooden floor with a loud \_clunk\_, the back cover breaking off, and the locks of hair inside it spilled out in all directions, before the separated piece rolled off behind a chest of drawers.

Tears spilling from her eyes, Astrid slid down the wall, burying her head into her arms, as sobs wracked her body, showing no signs of easing. After awhile, she cried herself to sleep.

This is how Ansfrida and Valka found her later on, after being too scared of interrupting her earlier. Walking up the stairs cautiously, both women stopped dead in their tracks as they saw Astrid's curled



up from just inside the door, face wet with tears and her eyes and face red from hours of crying. As they looked around the room, Valka gasped slightly at seeing the remains of the broken locket upon the floor. Holding it in her hands, she looked at Ansfrida worriedly.

"What...what happened here?" she asked, aghast, as she looked down at the locket in disbelief.

"I think..." Ansfrida answered quietly. "...I think we've just made things worse."

\* \* \*

><p><em>Ok, I know it wasn't as good as usual, but I hope it was at least ok. There are some bits I like about this chapter, it's just a shame the whole thing wasn't as good as last chapter. I'm really hoping I'm just bias towards my own chapter though : I DID put a lot of work into it, it just didn't turn out the way I wanted it too.\_

\_ At least in this chapter, you got to see a little more of Lennart (who, thank the gods, takes after his mother more than his father lol). I know he may have seemed quite wise for his age too, but after working with children this age, you would be surprised how bright children can be. Anna too, is really close to Siri, and the family, and I really like her unViking like character, so that's why I use her for these situations. She's so different to Snotlout. The village being so determined to find out what's going on is more from fear, than unsensitivity too as you saw, with them needing to find out what will happen to the village now. I know Leif wasn't in this much either, but we'll see more of him later on. I had Siri being the only one he's listen to because she's a child herself and if it came from her, I thought it would seem more real to him. \_

\_Anyway, so next chapter, we will see Astrid trying to come to terms with her grief, but good news is, it's also the chapter that Hiccup is finally able to return home. Hopefully this should be up in a week or two, if I get started straight after Christmas. I know Astrid seems a little OOC this chapter, but considering she thinks she just lost Hiccup, anyone would be in this situation. Siri will also find out about her mother being pregnant next chapter too, it just wasn't the right time to tell her this chapter. I had a scene, but it was cut as it didn't fit.\_

\_Ok, \_\_\*\*DON'T FORGET TO REVIEW! Just remember though, NO FLAMES, although constructive criticism is fine. \*\*\_\_I'm aware this chapter isn't my best, so please don't feel the need to tell me this in reviews lol. I know already! :p Next chapter will be better. Also, thanks for the 18 reviews I received last chapter, it was amazing!

—

\_Thanks for reading! :D \_

## 30. Chapter 30: Homecoming

\_I am so sorry that I'm late guys, I really am! I know it's been over 2 weeks, but I have a good excuse I promise. Not only did I start late because of Christmas, but I also had writer's block fairly early on and then I started to develop heat stress headaches, which

developed into a migraine last weekend because of the heat we've had recently. Australian summers can really suck. \_

\_Alright, so once again I'm not 100% happy with this chapter, especially when I wrote most of this when I had headaches. It's mostly about Astrid trying to come to terms with her grief and trying to move on as best as she can. Good news is, it's also the chapter that Hiccup comes home! But this chapter won't end the way you expect it too lol, so be prepared! I'm sorry that I took so long and this chapter isn't the best, again, but considering everything I went through to get this chapter up, I hope you can forgive me!\_

\_Anyway, on with the chapter!\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 30 " Homecoming<span>

\* \* \*

><p>"Ow!"<p>

"If you'd stay still, this wouldn't hurt as much."

"I thought you said it was healing?"

"It \_is,\_" Oili sighed, as she carefully unwound the bandage, wrapped tightly around the dragon rider's leg. "But it would have healed a lot faster if you'd just done what I'd asked in the first place!"

"I needed to get home!" Hiccup protested frantically, before he quickly glanced out the window. "I still do, for a matter of fact." Casting his gaze down to his leg, which was still slightly blistered as the bandages were unwrapped, he furrowed his brows in thought. Knowing where his thoughts were at, Oili dug her nails into his exposed flesh, causing Hiccup to let out a hiss.

"Don't even think about it," the old woman hissed, as she went back to her work. "You're not going anywhere on that dragon on yours."

Hiccup growled in frustration, before slumping back onto the chair.. "I thought you said I was ready to go home, though?"

"Well, you are," Oili said patiently, standing up to check Hiccup's other injuries; her eyes squinting at the crack in his head. "In just over a week, your head has almost completely healed over." She moved her gaze down to his ribs, running her hands over the cracked ribs. "Your ribs were not as bad as first feared either, but your leg-" She tutted slightly as she removed the rest of the bandage, revealing a number of blisters that still remained. "-Your leg \_has \_healed, but it would be too painful to fly home without re-damaging it."

"But I need to get home," Hiccup said desperately, eyes wide with anxiety. "It's been over a week since I was supposed to be home and Astrid..." Hiccup sighed and ran a hand through his hair, panic spreading through his body. "...Astrid's going to be in a panic. They all are!" Hiccup clutched at a lock of his hair, closing his eyes tightly in frustration. "And this feeling I have?" he added with a quick glance at Godric, sitting by the fire, "It's getting worse by

the day. I can't just sit here and do nothing!"

"And you won't have to," Godric said reassuringly as he stood up. "Trader Johan should be here today or tomorrow, and when he arrives, you can go home. There's nothing stopping you now. Your leg will heal in time once you get home."

"And if he doesn't come?" Hiccup asked weakly.

"I'll tell you what, lad," Godric said with a small smile. "If Johan isn't here by tomorrow afternoon, Iona and I will take you home ourselves." He glanced out towards the number of ships, still being mended after the previous week's storms. "Our ship is almost fixed by the looks of it."

"You sure I can't go home tonight?" Hiccup asked hopefully, looking over towards Toothless, who was napping by the fire, before emitting a loud "Ow!" as Oili hit him across the head with the palm of her hand.

"Unless you want to permanently damage that leg, don't even think about it!" the old woman said dangerously.

"I guess I have no choice," he said with a drawn out sigh, rubbing his head where she had struck him. "I just hope this feeling isn't as bad as I think it is" he added quietly, feeling the butterflies taking up residence once more in the pit of his stomach.

\* \* \*

><p>"Siri, when mummy feel better?"<p>

Her brother's voice snapped her back to reality. Looking up from her book she'd been reading on the floor, Siri saw her brother's fearful face staring down at her, his big green eyes shining with tears. Closing the book, the little girl sat up before taking her brother's hands in her own.

"Why do you ask that, Leifey?" she said gently as she looked into his eyes with a small smile.

"Mummy really sad," the little boy answered quietly, her eyes gazing down at his shoes. "Will she get better?"

"I..."

"Of course she will," Annika interrupted softly, sliding onto the ground beside them. Looking up the young woman, Siri gave her a grateful smile as she wrapped an arm around the young boy's shoulders.

"She will get better, buddy. Your mummy is just a little upset right now, that's all," Annika explained gently. "She just needs a bit of time."

"Why I not see her?" Leif asked sadly, turning his dragon doll over in his hands. "Is mummy upset with us, too?"

"Oh, sweetie, of course not," Annika said reassuringly, her stomach dropping slightly at the question. "Your mummy just needs some time

to get better is all. You can see her anytime you want."

"But, I wanna go home," Leif said miserably, his eyes filling with tears. "Why can't mummy get better at home?"

"Leifey is right; why can't she?" Siri asked with her brows furrowed in confusion. "We can look after her if we go home."

"Your mummy thinks you're better off staying here until she's well enough to look after you again," Annika answered weakly, her heart constricting seeing the looks of misery on the children's faces. "She doesn't want to upset you."

"But we lost daddy too," Siri replied quietly, lowering her eyes down to the book in her lap. "We should be looking after each other." She raised her eyes up to look at Annika, determination spreading across her features. "Shouldn't we?"

Annika opened her mouth to reply, before quickly shutting it once more. Raising her head, Annika cast her gaze towards Tuffnut, sitting at the table, with Eric on his lap, who looked back at her with a bewildered expression. Shrugging in uncertainty, Tuffnut gave a slight nod to the unspoken question crossing his wife's eyes.

"You know what? You're right," Annika said, taking Leif in her arms, as she hauled herself up off the floor. "You should be at home with your mum. It's not fair that you're staying with us, when you're just as sad." She cast her gaze down to Siri, who stood up, eyes widening in amazement. "Have you asked your mummy if you can go home?" Annika asked the young girl.

Siri shook her head wordlessly. "No, I...I didn't want to ask her" she mumbled. "She looked so...sad."

Annika bent down at eye level with Siri, before taking her hands in her own. "Maybe that's why you should ask her," Annika said gently, giving the girl a small smile. "Maybe your mum wants to go home, but doesn't want to upset you. It wouldn't hurt to try."

"Er... what if it makes things worse?" Tuffnut asked nervously. "Astrid isn't very, err, Astrid-ey right now."

"Yes, and it's our job to help her," Annika explained patiently, holding her hand out for Siri. "Maybe going home is what she needs."

"We going home?" Leif asked hopefully, his shining with excitement. "We be with mummy again?"

"Maybe," Annika said. "I'll take you over to see her now, alright?"

"But what if she says no?" Siri asked fearfully, holding tightly to Annika's hand. "I don't want to upset her."

"It won't hurt to try, Seer," Annika said. "But I'll talk to her if you want me too."

"Uh oh," Tuffnut mumbled, before Siri could answer, causing Annika to raise a bemused brow at her husband.

"What are you uh ohing for?"

"Er...I don't think that's a good idea, 'Nika," Tuffnut said, with a nervous chuckle. "Your 'talking' usually ends with you yelling at someone." Face turning serious, Annika was surprised when Tuffnut suddenly emitted a loud sigh. "And I don't think Astrid needs that right now."

" I know she doesn't," Annika said gently. "But maybe going home is what she needs." Moving Leif into a more comfortable position in her arms, Annika reached out her hand gripped with Siri's for the door. "And besides, the kids need their mother, I'm sure she'll agree..."

\* \* \*

><p>"No."<p>

Siri's face dropped. "What...what do you mean no? I...I thought you'd \_want \_to go home?"

"Oh sweetie, of course I do," Astrid reassured her daughter. "It's just..." She sighed. "It's just, I don't think I can right now."

"Why can't you?" Siri pleaded as she took hold of her mother's hand. "I thought you'd want to go home...to be closer to daddy..." Her voice broke.

Astrid's face turned red, as she struggled to keep her own tears in check. Bending down slowly, she reached up to cup her daughter's chin, making her jump and look up into her mother's tearful eyes.

"It's because of that reason that I can't go home, baby," Astrid said quietly, her voice cracking as she spoke. "I just...just can't be there right now. You understand that don't you?"

"No, I don't!" Siri shouted angrily, shoving her mother's hand off her face. "I thought being reminded of daddy was a good thing, not bad...!"

"I don't want to hear it, Seer!" Astrid exclaimed desperately, jumping up from the floor.

"Why not?" Siri squeaked, as tears spilled from her eyes. "Me and Leif have been staying with Aunt Annika for almost a \_week!\_ We want to go home! We \_miss you,\_ mummy!"

"We wanna go home," Leif said sadly.

"I miss you too, baby," Astrid choked out, reaching out to stroke her daughter's hair. "But...I just can't go home, right now. I can't!"

"But why..."

"I said no, Siri!" Astrid yelled crossly, causing Siri to freeze in shock. "Just because \_you \_want to be reminded that daddy is dead,

doesn't mean I want too!"

Everyone gasped in shock as the words came out of Astrid's mouth. As the room stood still, a crushing silence filled the ears of every person present; it was almost agony to endure. Siri's eyes widened as she took a few steps back, before she suddenly burst into tears and headed towards the door, wrenching the door open and slamming it shut behind her as she raced out. Looking from where her granddaughter vanished back to her daughter, Ansfrida shook her head in disbelief, before wordlessly racing off in search for her devastated grandchild.

Shaking slightly, Astrid wheeled around and took off up the stairs, slamming the bedroom door behind her. Downstairs, anger bubbled up from Annika's stomach as she looked up towards the upper floor, where Astrid had just vanished too. Standing there for a moment, her eyebrows narrowed and before anyone could blink, she was storming up the stairs after her, teeth clenched.

"Uh oh," Tuffnut said nervously, watching the scene. He quickly took hold of Leif and Eric's hands. "Come on, kiddo, let's go."

"But, Astrid-" Amund started, as Tuffnut and Leif made for the door.

"Trust me, you do not want to get in the way of 'Nika when she's mad," Tuffnut said with a shudder, as he made a run for the door. "Just go!"

Looking desperately in the direction of his daughter, Amund winced as he heard the door slam shut once more. Looking in the direction Tuffnut and the two toddlers had just left in; Amund quickly turned on his heel and followed as a loud yell came from upstairs.

"WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?!"

Astrid's face lost all vestiges of colour as she watched Annika approach her, her eyes flashing dangerously. Tearing her eyes away from her friend's disappointed face; Astrid gazed down at the ground, her eyes swimming with tears.

"I don't want to talk about it."

"Well, we are," Annika said sharply, rounding on Astrid so that the Viking woman had no other choice but to look up. "How could you say that to your own daughter?!"

"I know I shouldn't have said it," Astrid said tearfully, "but she should have dropped it when I said no!"

"She's 9 years old, Astrid!" Annika exclaimed, shaking her head in disbelief. "9 years old and missing her father!"

"And you think I don't?!" Astrid screamed, her voice echoing around the room. "You have no idea what I'm going through!"

Annika shook her head in disbelief. "You think I don't?" she asked incredulously. "Who's the one looking after your children right now? The children who are just as heartbroken as you are!" She snorted angrily, eyeing her friend as she sat on the bed open mouthed, gazing

up at furious young woman in shock. "Of course you wouldn't know that, would you?" she asked quietly. "You wouldn't know that your daughter cries herself to sleep every night, wanting her daddy..." Annika's mouth twitched slightly, "...or that your son wanders around in the middle of the night, looking for his father...just hoping that it's a bad dream." Annika sniffed loudly, reaching a hand up to wipe at a stray tear at the corner of her eye. "You wouldn't know that your daughter is putting on a brave front during the day, for the sake of her brother...!"

"I...I didn't know that," Astrid confessed, her voice breaking slightly. "I thought they were doing alright...sort of."

"Sort of!?" Annika exclaimed furiously, causing Astrid to wince. "They are anything but alright, Astrid, which you would know if you were with them, like a mother should be!"

"Don't you think I want to be?!" Astrid said desperately. "But I'm barely dealing with this myself, how I am supposed to help my kids too...?!"

"By being there for them!" Annika bellowed furiously, standing in front of Astrid, hands on her hips. "All those kids want is for their mother to be with them! They've already lost their father..."

"And I lost my husband!" Astrid snapped angrily, her own eyes flashing dangerously as she stood up. "I've lost my husband and everyone expects me to get over it within a week...!"

"We're not expecting anything of the sort!" Annika exclaimed, throwing her hands up in exasperation. "We know you've lost Hiccup, Astrid; we don't expect you to get over in a week, heck, even \_a\_ year. \_If\_ I lost Tuffnut, no matter how much the man drives me crazy, I would be heartbroken too. But you're giving up, and it's your kids that are feeling the pain!"

"What do you expect me to do?!" Astrid yelled.

"Grieve!" Annika yelled in frustration. "Grieve, cry, do anything that will help you, but don't ignore your children! Take them home, comfort them, grieve together like a family \_should\_, but stop acting like you're the only one who's lost Hiccup, because you certainly are aren't!"

"You have no right to talk to me this way!" Astrid screamed angrily, jumping up from the bed.

"I have every right!" Unfazed by Astrid's dangerous glare, Annika took a step forward, raising herself to her full height, which was at least a few inches above the Viking warrior. "I'm your friend, Astrid, and as your friend, you need to hear the truth! I don't know where the old Astrid has gone, but the one I'm talking to, isn't her. You've lost your spirit and everything that makes you who you are! If Hiccup could see you now, he would be devastated to see you giving up so easily...!"

"How would you know what Hiccup would act like?!" Astrid screeched, her anger bubbling to the surface.

"I may not have known him for as long, or as well as you, but I know

he wouldn't want to see his wife lose everything about her, and give up as soon as he vanishes from your life!" Annika exclaimed. "I know you're hurting, Astrid, we all do. We don't blame you. But we've lost our Chief, our friend, and your children have lost a wonderful father. You have every right to be upset, but stop acting like the world has ended and start acting like a mother again! You have two beautiful children and another on the way. Think about that, and stop acting like you have nothing in your life!"

"GET OUT!" Astrid sobbed, her breathing coming in deep rasping gasps. "JUST GET OUT AND LEAVE ME ALONE!"

"Fine!" Annika screamed heatedly, throwing her arms up. "Fine, I'll leave!" Storming over to the door breathing heavily with pent up anger, Annika suddenly stopped and turned around, her hand on the door. "I don't care how angry you are Astrid, but don't ignore Siri and Leif. They need you. Just think about it."

Getting no response, Annika heaved a deep sigh before opening the door and stomping down the stairs. Wrenching open the front door of the house, she suddenly found herself face to face with a small crowd of people standing just outside the door, one of them Tuffnut, their mouths hanging open slightly in shock.

"Let's go," she said quietly. "There's no point standing around here."

Tuffnut nodded silently, his mouth still hanging open, before he followed his wife back to the direction of the house. As they did so, Astrid, watching from the upstairs window, quickly slammed the shutter of the window frame shut with a loud\_bang\_, before heading over to the bed once more, anger pulsing through her body. Breathing heavily, she carefully lay down on her pillows, fingers twiddling with her wedding ring, as she replayed her friend's words in her head.

\_I don't care how angry you are Astrid, but don't ignore Siri and Leif. They need you. Just think about it.\_

Astrid sighed, as the anger in her body dissipated at the thought of her kids and the look on her daughter's face before she'd run out, and her heart constricted.

She'd take them home in the morning.

\* \* \*

><p>"You see him yet, bud?"<p>

Turning his gaze away from the shipping port outside, Toothless looked up at his rider, emitting a low coo of disappointment. Turning his own gaze to the activity outside, Hiccup heaved a sigh.

"Yeah, I don't see him either," he said, flopping into a chair. "I don't know about you, bud, but if Johan doesn't get here by lunch, we're leaving."

Toothless's eyes widened at those words, and he gave a low growl as Hiccup moved his burnt leg, emitting a low hiss as he did so. Making a move to get up, Toothless swiftly pushed him back into the seat,



his eyes narrowing dangerously, as if daring his rider to get up again.

Hiccup smiled slightly, and reached forward to stroke Toothless's head gently. As pain shot up his leg once more, Hiccup winced and closed his eyes against the pain, causing Toothless to rest his head on Hiccup's injured leg. Hiccup opened his eyes.

"I know my leg is still healing, bud, but it's been a week," Hiccup said anxiously, lifting his eyes to the ship yard outside again. "If we don't get home soon, I don't know what Astrid will do." Absently, he rubbed Toothless's head as he nudged his leg softly. "If she hasn't done anything already, that is," Hiccup added quietly.

Toothless gave a low coo to his friend. He knew how much Astrid worried about her husband, no matter how much she tried to deny the fact. Having spent 11 years in the same house as the Viking woman, the Night Fury hadn't failed to notice how anxious she got when Hiccup was caught in a storm while flying, or tripped over something with his metal leg. Sure, she tried to deny it; she was as stubborn as other any Viking, but Toothless easily noticed the worry she held for her husband. With Hiccup gone for over a week...

Hiccup felt a nudge on his hand, startling him out of attentive gaze. Looking down at the dragon, he frowned slightly as he watched Toothless move away from him, and gesture towards the door. His brows furrowed in confusion. Growling impatiently, Toothless wondered over to his rider once more and nudged his knee, before gesturing his head towards the door, then at his saddle. Realisation crossed Hiccup's eyes. Toothless was telling him to leave!

"Come on, then," Hiccup said, as a smile formed on his lips. "Before Oili catches us."

Rushing over to the Night Fury, Hiccup opened the door into the bright sunshine of the day, and peeking around, gestured to Toothless to go ahead of him. His leg throbbed in pain, but he ignored it, as the butterflies in his stomach came to life once again at the thought of home. Wincing slightly, he went to follow the dragon.

"HICCUP!"

Hearing Godric's voice ring out from across the trading market, Hiccup froze. Just ahead of him, Toothless did too, turning around with a sheepish look on his face as they watched the Chief approach them, his eyebrows raised.

"Don't tell me," Godric said, dryly, looking sheepish dragon to the nervous Viking, "you were trying to sneak away again?"

"Um, no, of course not," Hiccup said quickly, racking his brain for some excuse. "We were just taking a walk weren't we bud?" Looking over at the dragon, Toothless gave the older Viking an innocent smile that would fool no one. Clearing his throat nervously, Hiccup looked back at Godric. "Thought it might do my leg good," he added with a chuckle.

"Hmm," Godric mumbled with a shake of his head, "well you don't have

to worry about that now anyway." He gestured towards the far side of the island. "Johan's here."

Barely restraining himself only to a yelled "WHAT?!" Hiccup, broke into the fastest walk he could manage with his burnt and blistered leg. Feeling one or two exceptionally ripe blisters bursting under the strain he put on himself and the warm, flowing sensation turn into drops of red on the metal of his leg, he began to slow down as he peaked the small hill the centre of the trading village was built around. Slowing to a stop, he heard Toothless's rushed footfalls and the meaty \_thud\_ \_thud\_ thud\_ of Godric's boots coming up behind him as he spied the familiar shape of Trader Johan's boat in the near distance, berthed at a pier which grew from another like the branches of a tree. As Godric and Toothless caught up with him, he had already spied Johan, who was chatting quiet animatedly with Iona.

"Heh, she's a quick one, isn't she?" quipped Godric.

Taking the sight in, a funny feeling grew in Hiccup's stomach. He was going home. Home. It felt good, but there was also some unease mixed in as well. Moving forward to join the conversation, Godric quickly held out a hand to stop him.

"You better tend to that leg, first, lad," he said quickly, casting his gaze down to the blood seeping down the metal from the blistering. Looking down, Hiccup winced slightly seeing the red ooze, and as he bent down to tend to it, he caught bits of the conversation now occurring between the trader and Iona.

"Would have been here sooner, but I had to go back to Berk after that storm," he heard Johan saying. As Hiccup was listening, he distinctly heard a slight hesitation after the word 'Berk' and his stomach dropped slightly. What was going on there? He wondered, before Johan resumed his conversation. "Then I went to Outcast Island."

"Speaking of Berk, Johan, we have someone from there that you may know very well." Iona quickly cast her gaze around, and spotting Hiccup loitering nearby, she quickly motioned for him to come over. "We were hoping you can take him home for us?"

"Of course," Johan said with a slight frown, "but who..." Stopping mid sentence, Johan's mouth dropped open in surprise as he saw Hiccup limp over to them, Toothless and Godric following behind. Seeing Johan's shocked gaze, Hiccup awkwardly waved to the trader.

"Urgh, hey, Johan," he said with a slight smile. "I guess you didn't expect me here, huh?"

No, I didn't -" Johan replied, with his calm facade breaking apart in bewilderment "Great Odin's ghost, you're alive! We thought for sure you were..." Johan's eyes widened in horror as he realised what he was about to say. "Uh oh."

"Thought I was what?" Hiccup asked fearfully, his heart thumping so loudly in his chest that it hurt. "Johan, do..." Hiccup swallowed nervously, "...do the others think I'm d...dead?"

"They went out searching for you when the little terror came back without you," Johan said nervously, not meeting Hiccup's eyes as he spoke. "I was leaving when...when Astrid came home. Without

you."

"What happened?" Hiccup asked, his body shaking slightly. When Johan didn't answer, he took hold of the man's shoulder. "Johan, what happened?!"

"I don't know for sure!" Johan answered quickly, as he finally met Hiccup's eyes. "All I know was that Astrid had come home in tears because they'd found Toothless's tail in the middle of the ocean." Johan sighed, before his voice dropped dramatically. "Apparently the lass had a breakdown in the middle of the village. That's all I heard. I left afterwards." Looking up at Hiccup, he was taken aback at the look of devastation suddenly etched in the young man's eyes. Reaching up to pat his shoulder, Hiccup's breathing began to speed up, tears quickly filling his shocked emerald eyes. He cast his head around wildly to Godric and Iona.

"I told you I had a bad feeling!" he exclaimed frantically, raising a hand to his head as a sweat broke out on his forehead. "My wife thinks I'm dead, and here I've been resting for the past week!" He turned his attention back to Johan. "Can you take me home?" he asked desperately, the tears in his eyes spilling their way onto his cheeks. "I can't fly home because of my leg. I have to go!"

"No worries, sir," Johan answered, without hesitation. "Just let me gather some supplies and we'll leave after lunch." Patting Hiccup's shoulder, Johan looked at Hiccup with a firm smile. "We'll get you home, Hiccup, I promise."

Hiccup nodded, as he wiped at his cheeks. "Thanks Johan," he said croakily.

Nodding back at him, Johan quickly turned his attention to Godric. "Chief, could you help me get some supplies?" he asked, as he rushed around to find his list. "The sooner we get this ship ready, the sooner I can take Hiccup home."

"I'll get some people to help," Godric said quickly, before he turned to Hiccup. "Go and pack, lad. You're leaving as soon as this ship is ready!"

"Hang on, Astrid," Hiccup murmured, as he took off for the house. "I'll be home as soon as I can."

\* \* \*

><p>"Are you sure you're ready for this?"<p>

"You're the one who told me to go home," Astrid replied, not even looking up from her packing. "So I'm going."

"Well...yeah..." Annika answered slowly, biting her lip anxiously. "But I shouldn't have said it." She placed a hand on Astrid's shoulder, making her jump and look up quickly from stuffing things into a satchel. "Astrid, I don't want you to rush into this," Annika said uneasily, "no matter what I said."

"You were right, though," Astrid said with a sigh, looking up at Annika's worried expression. "I \_was \_thinking of myself. I've been here all week, thinking how this is affecting me, yet I barely even

thought about my own kids." Tears welled up in Astrid's eyes, and Annika stepped forward to comfort her, only for Astrid to stop her with a hand. "Let me talk, 'Nika," she said patiently, and Annika quickly nodded and stepped back. "I thought the kids were better off away from me," Astrid continued shakily, "but because of that I didn't even know that Siri was crying herself to sleep at night, or that Leif was still hoping to see his father. I should have known that..."

"Siri hides it so well though, Astrid," Annika said. "I didn't even know until a few days ago-"

"Siri is good at hiding how she feels," Astrid said quietly. "Which is why she should have been with me. I know how she handles things, and yet I've been here, feeling sorry for myself, while my children were with you..." She sniffed, as the tears began to spill onto her cheeks. "I didn't even know they were with you!" she added, with a glance at Annika. "All this time I thought Anna had them, what's that saying?!"

"I've had them for a week," Annika explained gently, sitting down beside the grief stricken young woman. "Anna did have them for a few nights, but she doesn't have the room for both kids, where I do." She placed an arm around Astrid's shoulders. "You don't have to blame yourself about that."

"But I do," Astrid said quietly. "I should have been there for them, but...but I wasn't. I've been here, thinking I was the only one who's lost...who's lost Hiccup and I've ignored my own kids." Emitting a choked sob, Astrid quickly wiped at her eyes. "You were right last night," she said to Annika, "I am losing my spirit...and...I'm afraid." She wiped at her eyes again, with a sniff. "...I'm afraid of becoming the person I was before because if I do..." she trailed off. "I'm afraid that everything Hiccup loved about me will...will disappear, and I won't be the same person..."

"Astrid..." Annika said softly, as she pulled the young woman closer to her. "We aren't going to let that happen..."

"I know," Astrid sobbed. "But this is why I need to go home. I need to feel closer to Hiccup, like Siri said. Even...even if it's hard."

"Astrid, I can stay with you tonight if you want," Annika said kindly. "You don't have to go home alone."

"I won't be alone," Astrid said with a small smile. "I'll have the kids. And like you said, we need to go home, and grieve, together." Her voice broke slightly.

"Are you sure?" Annika asked nervously. "It will be the first time you'll be home since...since we found out..."

"We'll be fine," said Astrid, standing up abruptly, almost knocking Annika off the bed. "The kids and I need to go home at some point, get some of our normal routine back..." Astrid trailed off, a forced, thin smile draped across her face that made Annika's stomach turn. "Today's no worse or better than any other day..." Astrid half-sighed as she shouldered her satchel "- besides, I told the kids that I'd be taking them home today, so I will."

"But...Astrid-"

"Mum!" Annika heard Siri call from downstairs.

"I'm coming!" Astrid called back, and without another word to Annika, hurried down the stairs out of sight. Frowning slightly, Annika followed her, anxiety gnawing at her stomach at the smile she'd just seen on her friend's face.

"Are you ready to go, Seer?" Astrid said gently, bending down to give her daughter a kiss on her blonde locks.

Siri nodded wordlessly. "I'm ready," she said quietly. "I...I just want to go home."

"Me too," Leif chimed in.

"I know, baby," Astrid said, bending down to scoop her son into her arms. "We're going now, I promise."

"Are...are you ready mum?" Siri asked her worriedly, as she took her mother's hand.

"I am if you are," Astrid said, smiling that same thin smile as before, making Annika's stomach churn nervously again. "Come on."

Opening the door to the house, Annika and Ansfrida watched as Astrid and the kids exited the house, all talking loudly, but with a slight sadness within their tones. As the door shut behind them, Annika sighed nervously as she gazed at where they had been just moments before.

"Are you alright, Annika?" Ansfrida voice broke through her reverie. "You look worried."

Annika looked over to the older woman with a worried frown. "I'm not sure," she said slowly. "It's just...did you see that smile on Astrid's face? It wasn't a real smile."

"You expect a real one?" Ansfrida asked her in surprise.

"Well, no," Annika admitted. "But it was like she was \_trying \_to fool us. I don't think she's ready to go home."

"You think she's rushing it?"

Annika nodded. "I know I said she should go home, but not this fast." She looked back to where the little family had disappeared too. "I'm worried she's doing it because of what I said, and not because she's ready." Annika sighed. "She's afraid of losing everything Hiccup loved about her, and she thinks this is the way to keep her from losing that."

Ansfrida frowned. "Maybe you should go over and help?" she suggested nervously. "Just in case..."

"I'll wait outside," Annika said. "If she needs me, I'll stay with her."

The last few steps before the door were difficult for Astrid as they approached the house; not because she was tired, or the terrain was hard; each step was a mental effort, to take that one foot closer to the house where they were a family. The butterflies filling her chest, the heart beating loudly in her ears, were the only things keeping her upright, as well as the thought of her children beside her. \_How do they feel, if it's this hard for\_ \_me?\_ Astrid thought. Finally reaching the heavy oaken door, a dark iron plate bearing the name "Haddock", Astrid took a deep, heavy breath, and pushed the door open.

It was like time had frozen within the house. Toys were scattered on the floor. A blanket was draped askew over the wooden couch. Unwashed dishes sitting on the table, some scraps of food the Terrible Terrors had not snuck in to take, still lingering. It was just like they had left it when they had heard the news, when everything had changed. Stepping into the house was like stepping back into that exact memory for Astrid. Laying her satchel down on the couch gingerly while the children wandered in â€" Leif heading straight to the toys and Siri to clean the dishes â€" Astrid looked, through a few aberrant rays of sun and the motes of dust that danced on them, to her wedding portrait hanging on the wall. Her throat began to tighten, her fists balled, and a single tear rolled down her cheek, as her breathing began to quicken.

"Mumâ€| "

Astrid was snapped out of her reverie by the sound of Siri's voice behind her. Quickly wiping at the wetness on her cheeks, she forced a smile on her lips turned around to look at her daughter.

"Yeah, sweetie?"

Siri gestured to the dishes in front of her. "Do...do you want me to clean these up?" she asked quietly, a dish in one hand.

Astrid shook her head. "No," she said, reaching out to take the plate from her hand. "They've been there for over a week, what's one more night?" She bent down in front of the 9 year old and stroked her cheek gently with a finger. "Why don't you go upstairs and unpack your things?" Astrid suggested with a small smile.

Siri looked down at her mother, sadness filling her eyes. Heaving a deep sigh, she reached out to take hold of her mother's free hand.

"Were you ready to come home, mum?" she asked sadly, taking in her mother's glassy eyes.

Astrid was silent for a moment as she took this in. Taking a deep breath, she tightened her grip on her little girl's hands, before looking up into Siri's bright blue eyes.

"Not really, Seer," Astrid said honestly, "but if you're ready, I should be. We just...just have to keep going, I guess."

"But -"

"\_No\_ buts, baby," Astrid said quickly, "I shouldn't have said no to you yesterday when you asked. This is our home and I should have understood that." When Siri didn't answer, Astrid gently brought her chin down so that their eyes met each other. "Okay?" Astrid asked her.

Siri nodded. "Okay."

"Alright," Astrid said nervously, looking up towards the second level. "Why don't you take Leif, and go and unpack? Aunt Annika said she'll be over later with dinner."

Siri nodded wordlessly, before turning to her brother sitting on the floor, Smokey in his arms. At the sound of his name, the little boy looked up and upon seeing his sister's look; he quickly got up and took the hand she had stretched out, before she helped the toddler up the stairs, both of them as silent as each other. As she reached the top of the stairs, Siri stopped and looked over the railing at her mother's still form downstairs.

"Mum, do...do you want some help?" she asked kindly. "I can unpack your stuff too, if you want."

Astrid smiled up at her, tears filling her eyes once more. "You go ahead, baby, I'll...I'll be up in a minute, I promise."

Siri nodded again, before she led her brother to his room. As the two children vanished into the room, Astrid's smile faded from her face and her stomach fluttered slightly, as she picked up the satchel from the couch, before making her way up the wooden steps to the first door on the upper level. Standing there, her heart beating loudly in her chest, Astrid hovered in the doorway for a moment, before she reached out and pushed the door to the bedroom open.

Astrid took one meek step into the room, the barest of emotion gnawing at her face. The room was just like that of a previous busy day; scattered council papers and sketches littered the desk and floor where they had been left, as if they were waiting for the end of the day when Hiccup would come back to tidy them up. The rest of the room was the same. The blankets on the bed were only half made and scattered on the floor where the kids had been jumping up and down on the soft blanket mattress of Hiccup's design the day that...

Astrid shook her head to clear the thoughts. Quickly hurrying over to the bed, Astrid placed the satchel down and began to unpack, casting her thoughts aside for the moment. As she pulled her nightgown out, her hand touched something cold at the bottom of the bag, causing her to jump. Reaching in, her hand clasped around the remains of her locket making her heart shudder slightly within her chest as she did so. As she pulled it out, her stomach dropped as she noticed the damage she had done to it. The back was broken off, the front of it scratched, the pieces of hair missing from the centre, as well as a broken chain, she noted. Throat tightening slightly, Astrid quickly wrenched the dresser beside her open, and shoved it inside, shutting it with a \_bang\_ behind her.

Breathing heavily, Astrid turned her back on the drawer and began to patter around the room, putting stuff back as if in a daze. Her thoughts were empty, and her emotions buried deep as she opened and

closed desks in the room, tidying up the mess that had been previously left there. Picking up a piece of paper on Hiccup's desk, she suddenly stopped. Slowly looking down upon it, her eyes burned with unshed tears as she ran her eyes over an unfinished drawing of her and Siri playing with Midnight a few weeks back. She didn't know he'd been present when this had happened. Heart hammering in her ears, she gradually made her way over to the bed and sank down on it, all the while, her eyes were locked onto the picture held within her hand.

The picture was simple. It was of her and Siri playing on the grass outside the house, laughing at the little terror, who Astrid recalled, was frantically chasing a ball of light being made by Siri, Leif asleep in her arms as this was happening. Tears spilled from Astrid's eyes as she ran her hand over the picture, a sob building in her throat. She hadn't even known Hiccup was home when this was happening. It had been just after lunch and Hiccup was usually out on rounds at this time of the day. Shoulders shaking, Astrid let out a loud sob, bringing her hand to her mouth, as her chest and throat began to constrict and her breathing became laboured. Looking around the room, she saw pictures Hiccup had drawn in his spare time littering the walls. Council papers on his desk. His clothes thrown everywhere like the slob he could be. Toothless's empty rock bed in the corner. His last written letter on the desk...

"Mum?"

Astrid started and jumped up off the bed, as she wheeled around to face Siri standing in the doorway. The 9 year olds eyes were wide with fear as she took in her mother's shaking form, and as she reached out a hand to her, Astrid sniffed loudly, and looked around the room frantically, her body shaking furiously as tears spilled from her eyes unchecked.

"Mum, are you okay?" Siri asked anxiously, "do you want me to get Grandma?"

Astrid shook her head violently. "I can't do this," she sobbed. "I thought I could, but I can't!"

"What can't you do?" Siri asked fearfully, her breathing quickening at the state of her mother.

"I can't be in this house!" Astrid exclaimed hysterically. "I'm sorry, baby, but I can't stay here! Just...just go back to Annika."

Brushing past Siri in the doorway, Astrid rushed down the stairs and headed for the door, before wrenching it open with a shaking hand. Looking towards where her mother had run off too, Siri quickly took hold of Leif shaking hand and rushed after her.

"Mum!"

Deaf to her daughter's cries, Astrid ran out of the house, her vision blurred with unshed tears. Breathing heavily, Astrid stopped for a moment, before she hurried down the small hill, straight into the arms of a shocked Annika, running up from the direction of the village.



"Astrid!" she exclaimed, her eyes widening as she saw Astrid's shaking form. "Astrid, what's wrong?"

"I'm sorry, Annika, but I can't go home!" Astrid said, her voice choked with tears. "I thought I could do it, but...but it just reminds me Hiccup is dead!"

"Astrid, it's...it's just going to take some time," Annika said weakly. "Just take the kids and live with Val for a while then...until you're ready to go back-"

"I'm not going back!" Astrid exclaimed angrily, before her voice dropped. "I can't. There's no way I can live there without being reminded that..." Trailing off, Astrid suddenly took off without another word, leaving Annika stunned and speechless in her wake, as Siri and Leif breathlessly came up to her, along with Ansfrida, Valka and Anna, who were staring open mouthed after Astrid's distressed form.

"What happened?" Valka asked aghast.

"Mum panicked," Siri said tearfully. "She couldn't stay there." Bursting into tears, Valka quickly wrapped her arms around her granddaughter tightly, pulling her and a weeping Leif into her arms, her own eyes burning slightly with unshed tears.

"What are we going to do?" Ansfrida asked quietly, her voice dropping to a whisper so as not to upset the two children. "She's getting worse."

"There's nothing we can do," Anna said sorrowfully, before Annika could answer. "We just have to hope the old Astrid comes back to us."

"And if not?"

" Then we're in trouble."

"Hiccup! Are you ready to go?"

\* \* \*

><p>"I'm coming!"<p>

Rushing over to Johan's ship, Hiccup winced slightly as his bandaged leg throbbed from under him. Ignoring the pain though, he and Toothless raced over as fast as their legs could carry them, a small satchel of provisions clutched in his hand.

"Are you ready, sir?" Johan asked him, as soon as Hiccup arrived, puffing loudly as he caught his breath. "He doesn't need anything checked does he?" he asked Oili, turning to the old healer.

"No, but make sure he stays off that leg," Oili said sternly. "It's still healing."

Hiccup nodded to her gratefully, before he turned to Godric and Iona standing beside her, and held out his hand to them.

"Thank you for looking after me," he said gratefully, as the older

chief clasped his hand. "I would have been dead if you hadn't found me."

"Our pleasure, Hiccup," Godric said with a smile. "Just don't go flying in any storms again. I'd rather meet you in better terms next time."

"We might head to Berk soon," Iona said. "I want to meet your wife."

"You'll get along with her well," Hiccup said with a slight chuckle. At the mention of his wife, the smile quickly faded from his face and he turned to Johan quickly.

"How long will it take to get home?" he asked anxiously.

"Three days, if the wind is with us," Johan said, as the ship left began to drift away from the dock. Seeing the uneasy look cross the dragon rider's face, though, he quickly reached out and patted his shoulder reassuringly. "Don't worry, Hiccup, I'll get you home."

Giving a small coo, Toothless nudged up to Hiccup's leg, who looked down at the dragon with a small smile.

"Don't worry bud," Hiccup said, patting the dragon on the top of his head. "We'll be home soon." He sighed as he watched the trading island getting smaller in the distance. "I just hope Astrid doesn't kill me when we get there."

\* \* \*

><p>Siri sighed heavily as she gazed out towards the horizon in front of her. The sun was setting and the clouds were tinged with a slight pinkish glow as night edged closer on the village. It had been three days since the young girl had been with her mother at her house, and all signs pointed that it would be a long time coming before she would go back there again with her. Throwing a rock into the ocean, Siri's stomach churned slightly at the images of her pale, drawn mother at her grandparent's house just that morning. She wished her daddy was there.<p>

"Siri, what are you doing out here?" came her grandmother's voice from behind her.

Siri was startled out of her thoughts as Valka sunk down beside her, an arm wrapping around her shoulders. Heaving a sigh, Siri picked up a rock beside her and cast it out towards the water below.

"Just thinking," she answered quietly, casting a gaze up to her grandmother. "Grandma...do you think mum will get better?" she asked hopefully.

"I'm...I'm not sure, sweetie," Valka replied, her face falling. "But I guess we just have to give her time."

"But why is mum still like this when-" Siri trailed off for a moment, "-when you're out and about looking after the village already?"

"I don't... I don't know," Valka said quietly, as she pulled the girl

closer. "To be honest, I don't think I have any tears left..."

"Neither do I," Siri said flatly. "I don't think Leif does either." She looked up at the older woman, worry evident in her eyes. "Is...is that bad?" she asked anxiously, her hands twisting nervously in her lap.

Valka shook her head as a reassuring smile formed on her lips. "No, sweetie, it isn't," she said. "It just means we all have different ways of grieving." The smile faded off her face as she gazed out towards the ocean. "Your grandfather once told me that it's always the strongest who are hit the hardest in these situations." Siri frowned in confusion. "It just means," Valka elaborated quickly, "that the strongest people can stand most things, but then a single thing like this can shatter it so suddenly. Your mother is such a strong person, Seer, but I think this is too hard for even her to bear. But people, like us, who people think might be affected more, rise to the occasion more because it's a situation we're not used too. Do...do you understand, sweetie?"

Siri nodded slowly. "I think so," she said. "So mummy has spent her whole being strong that this is something that even she can't handle?"

"Pretty much," Valka said gently.

Siri was silent for a moment as she contemplated this. As she sat there, she bit her lip slightly as something came to the front of her thoughts. Noticing the uncertain look on Siri's face, Valka frowned and squeezed the girl's shoulder gently.

"What's wrong, Seer?"

Siri remained silent for a moment, before she slowly looked up at her grandmother. "Is...is true that mum is having another baby?"

Surprised, Valka looked down at her grandmother, eyebrows raised. "Where did you hear that?" she asked, bewildered.

"I heard Grandma Ansfrida and mummy talking the other night when I stayed there," Siri answered softly. "They thought I was asleep." Looking into Valka's stunned expression, she smiled slightly. "So it is true?" she asked.

Valka nodded. "It's true. She's about 2 months or so. She never got to tell your father."

"Is that why she's been hit really hard?" Siri guessed.

"I think so."

They both sat in silence for a while, watching the sun slowly beginning to sink below the horizon. It wasn't until a small tinge of blue formed in the distance, when Siri spoke up again.

"Do you think I should help mummy when the baby comes?"

"\_I think\_ you shouldn't be thinking about this at all," came

Gobber's voice from behind them. Wheeling around Valka and Siri watched as the blacksmith limped over to them and sat beside them with a loud grunt, as he manoeuvred his peg leg in front of him, all the while trying to keep a hold on a slumbering Leif held tightly in his arms. Finally comfortable, he turned his attention to the little girl beside him.

"I don't think this is something you need to be worrying yourself over at the moment, Seer," Gobber said firmly. "You may be future Chief, but you don't have to act it yet. Besides-" he grinned, "-you should be thinking of your birthday tomorrow. You don't turn 9 every day."

Siri gave him a small smile, before it quickly faded from her face. "I don't want to celebrate," she said quietly. "Not with mummy so upset."

"Seer, you need to have fun, even if it's for a day," Gobber protested, before he suddenly stopped, causing Valka and Siri to look up at him, confusion crossing their faces. Seeing his gaze was upon the water in front of him, both Vikings followed his line of sight, squinting their eyes in the darkness.

"What is it?" Valka asked him, her heart echoing within her ears in the silence.

"I'm not sure," Gobber said slowly, his own eyes squinted. "But...it looks like Trader Johan."

"What?!" Valka exclaimed, as she stood up. "But he was just here a few weeks back." Unable to see anything, but the dark water below, she turned her attention back to the older Viking. "Are you sure it's Johan, Gobber?"

"I'd know that ship anywhere, I'm sure. I just can't tell" Gobber said with a frown.

"Here!" Siri said quickly, pulling a spy glass from her pocket.

"Thanks, Seer," Gobber said gratefully, before he quickly put it up to his eye. "It is Johan!" he exclaimed in surprise, squinting his eyes further. "He has someone with him," he said, his brows furrowed.

"Johan never lets anyone travel with him," Valka said. "Do you know who it is?"

"I'm not sure," he said, not taking his eyes off the ship. "Hang on" he added, before he suddenly let out a sudden yell. "Beard of Thor, it can't be!" he exclaimed.

"What?!" Valka and Siri asked in unison.

"It's...It's Hiccup!" Gobber exclaimed in amazement, a giant grin forming on his face. "It's Hiccup and Toothless! They're alive!"

Quickly yanking the spyglass out of his hand, Valka hurriedly put it to her own eye and looked down at the slow moving ship arriving at

the docks. Seeing Hiccup and Toothless on the ship, looking around as they arrived, Valka's heart quickly sped up, dropping the spyglass as she rushed off down the docks without another word; Siri running after her. Standing there in shock, Gobber was startled out of his reverie when he heard Leif's suddenly yell from his arms.

"Daddy!" Leif looked up at Gobber, his eyes widening in shock. "Uncle Gobber, it daddy! Wanna see daddy!"

"We're going, lad, don't worry!" Gobber said quickly as he followed where Valka and Siri had disappeared too.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup paced back and forth nervously as the ship slowly came into dock. Turning his head up towards the village, he failed to see anyone walking around the plaza, despite the fact that it was not quite yet dark. As the ship came to a soft <em>thunk<em> as it reached the dock, Hiccup quickly jumped off the ship without waiting for the plank to be lowered down.

"Woah, hang on, Chief," Johan said quickly. "You shouldn't have done that with that leg."

"Sorry, Johan," Hiccup said absently, as Toothless jumped off the ship beside him. "I just want to see Astrid--"

"Daddy!"

Wheeling around, Hiccup's heart felt like it stopped as he saw his daughter fly down the docks, blonde hair coming loose from her braid behind her; his mother and Gobber following close behind her. His own eyes filling with tears, Hiccup quickly bent down and held out his arms, just in time for her to fling herself into his arms, and wrap her arms around his neck as tight as she could without strangling him.

"Seer!" Hiccup exclaimed in relief as he pulled her closer, before dropping a kiss into her golden locks.

Hugging her father tighter, Siri couldn't help a few tears slipping from her eyes, before her shoulders began to shake as a sob released from her throat. Burying her head into his shoulder, Siri wrapped her arms around her father tighter than she ever had before.

"Easy there, baby," Hiccup said thickly, tears spilling from his own eyes. "It's alright. I'm right here, now."

Sniffling loudly, Siri looked up into her father's tear-filled eyes. "Where were you, daddy?" she asked, her voice squeaking slightly. "We...we thought you were dead."

"I know, baby, I know," Hiccup whispered gently, stroking his daughter's cheek. "I'll explain later, I promise. Is that ok?"

Siri nodded, before she flung her arms around her father once more, giving him a kiss on the cheek. "I'm just glad you're alive," she sobbed. "I was so scared."

"I know, I know," Hiccup soothed gently. "It's alright

now."

Sniffing loudly, Siri wiped a hand over her eyes as she let go of her father's neck before stepping back to fling her arms around Toothless instead, who gave a small coo as he nuzzled up to the young girl.

"You are a sight for sore eyes, old friend," Gobber said with a shaky chuckle, reaching out to pat Hiccup on the shoulder. "We thought you were gone for sure."

"I know," Hiccup said with a sigh. "I'm so sorry, I really am."

"Don't worry about it," Gobber said with a grin. "We're just glad you're home." Chuckling slightly, he turned to Johan. "Where'd you find him, Johan?" he asked.

"It's a long story," Johan said with a laugh. "I'll just let Hiccup explain it later. I'm just the messenger."

"Thank Odin that you are," Gobber said in relief.

"Me too," Hiccup said gratefully, before he was suddenly engulfed by his son's arms around his neck, as he stretched out for his daddy. "Leifey!"

"You ok, daddy?" Leif asked him nervously. "Siri said you not come back."

"It's alright, buddy," Hiccup reassured him gently. "I'm here now. You don't have to worry."

Nodding silently, Leif wrapped his arms around Hiccup's neck tighter, before giving him a kiss on the cheek. Wrapping his arms around his son's form, Hiccup hugged his little boy close to him, before placing a kiss into his auburn locks. Looking up over his son's head, Hiccup made eye contact with his mother, standing slightly back from them all, her face pale as she gazed back at him. Stroking his son's hair back slightly, he gently passed him back to Gobber with a small smile, before he made his way over to her. She was standing shock still in her place, her hands shaking slightly as they were held against her body. As he approached, Valka raised a hand to her mouth to suppress a sob that was building in her throat.

"Mum?" Hiccup said softly, laying a hand on her shoulder.

Breathing heavily, Valka slowly raised her hand up to Hiccup's cheek, tears spilling from her eyes in the process. Stroking his cheek softly, she then reached up and stroked his hair back as a small smile began to form on her lips. As her throat began to clench tightly, her lip began to quiver, before she suddenly flung her arms around her son, as a sob escaped her throat.

"I thought I'd lost you," she sobbed, tears falling thick and fast down her cheeks. "I never thought I'd see you again."

Wrapping his arms around his mother's form, Hiccup held her close to him, tears falling from his own eyes. "I know, mum," he soothed, sniffing loudly. "I know. I'm sorry, I'm so sorry."

"Don't you ever do this to me again!" Valka exclaimed angrily, as she glanced up to meet her son's eyes. "Do you understand me? I can't lose you, Hiccup. I've already lost your father, I can't lose you too!"

"I know, mum," Hiccup said tearfully, meeting his mother's gaze. "I promise, I'll be careful from now on."

Lip quivering again, Valka pulled Hiccup into a tight hug once more, her hand reaching up to stroke his hair back. Wrapping his arms around his mother, Hiccup quickly wiped the wetness from his own cheeks, before Valka finally relinquished him with a look to his leg as Hiccup winced slightly.

"What in the name of Thor happened to you!" she exclaimed incredulously, as she bent down to look at his leg.

"I'll explain later, I promise," Hiccup said, as he moved his leg painfully, reaching out a hand to Toothless. "Where's Astrid?" he asked nervously, looking around for any sign of his wife. "Is she alright?"

Hiccup's heart sunk as he watched Gobber, Valka and Siri exchange worried glances to one another.

"I'm not going to lie, son," Valka said gently, as she bent down to hug Toothless. "She's not good."

"Where is she?" Hiccup asked, his voice trembling slightly.

"At Grandma and Grandpa's," Siri answered quickly, before Gobber opened his mouth. "She...she hasn't left there in 3 days. She's really upset, daddy."

"She isn't herself, lad," Gobber said with a sigh. "She hasn't been for days-"

Before he got to finish, Hiccup was racing up the docks.

\* \* \*

><p>Astrid's ears pricked at the sound of loud talking outside her window. Sitting up slowly, her eyes narrowed as she payed close attention, only for her heart to skip a beat at a voice that joined the others, loud and anxious as it approached closer to the house. A voice she never thought she'd hear again. Sitting up slowly, she made a move to get up, but as she did, the voice disappeared. She listened closer. Nothing. She knew it was too good to be true.<p>

Lying back down onto her pillows again, Astrid could feel tears beginning to prick at her eyelids as she closed her eyes once more. \_Get a grip, Astrid;\_ she thought to herself, \_you're just hearing what you want to hear. \_Curling up into a ball, Astrid felt herself falling to sleep again, when she the door suddenly burst open downstairs, startling her back to consciousness. Sitting bolt upright, anger pulsed through her body as she heard loud footsteps rush over the wooden boards on the lower level, approaching the stairs. (\_Was that metal she heard?\_) Why can't her parents just leave her alone! As the door burst open, she didn't budge from her

position.

"Mum, go away!" Astrid hissed angrily, not bothering to see who it was. "I told you to leave me alone!"

"It's not your mum, Astrid. It's me."

Astrid froze for a moment as she heard the voice. \_It can't be!\_ Slowly turning around, Astrid's eyes widened in shock as they fell upon Hiccup, standing there sheepishly, his eyes glinting with anxiety as he notice the pale pallor of her cheeks and the dark circles under her eyes. She looked as if she hadn't slept in days. As Hiccup continued to gaze at her, he noticed all traces of colour she had suddenly drain away as she slowly got up, eyes locked on him in shock at the sight of him. He stepped forward cautiously.

"Astrid?"

Shaking her head to snap her out of whatever trance she was in, Astrid's breathing sped up as she slowly moved towards him like a sleepwalker, her eyes filling to the brim with tears.

"But..." she stammered, looking him up and down. "...But I found Toothless's tail, you...you can't be here..."

"Well, if I'm not, I'm one solid ghost," Hiccup replied humorously, trying to make light of the situation, before his face suddenly turned serious again. 'I know what you found, Astrid, and I am \_so\_ sorry," Hiccup said quickly, barely taking a breath as he tried to explain. "If I'd known what was happening, I would have tried to come home sooner, but the storm..." he trailed off. "I never meant for any of this to happen, Astrid, I'm sorry..."

Hiccup was suddenly cut off by Astrid's hand suddenly cupping his cheek, a small smile slowly beginning to form on her lips, as her breathing quickened slightly. Returning the smile, Hiccup reached out to cup her hand, but before he could, Astrid's eyes suddenly flashed dangerously, before she suddenly pulled her hand back over her head. Before Hiccup could react, he suddenly felt a painful stinging sensation erupt over his cheek, making his eyes water and his cheek pulse painfully; his brain racked with bewilderment.

It took Hiccup a moment to realise that Astrid had slapped him.

\* \* \*

><p><em>I bet none of you expected that! I've been planning that for ages and I'm happy with how that bit at least turned out. Not sure I feel the same way about the rest of the chapter, though, but headaches or not, I had to give you something. Next chapter will be the final chapter in this storyline where Hiccup and Astrid properly reunite. What happened at the end of this chapter will wrap up fairly quickly next chapter too, so don't worry! I just always imagined Astrid would do something like this in this situation is all. I know she was a little OOC again too, but I know about instances where such a strong person breaks down like this, so in reality grief makes anyone act differently than usual.<em>

\_Alright, I know this chapter was a little everywhere, but I hope



you're all happy to see Hiccup home. I also hope you liked seeing more of Annika's character, who is sort of like me when I'm mad lol, considering she gets really mad and then feels bad about it later. But she tries. Next chapter will start to wrap up everything that's happened and hopefully be really sweet. If there's anything you would like to see in this chapter, just let me know in the reviews, because it's not as well planned as the rest of it. If I like the idea, I'll add it in :) Please do not suggest a lemon though, because I won't write any scenes like that, although they can get close. After this storyline, we're moving on, which I'll explain more of later.

—  
\_Alright, so, \_\_\*\*DON'T FORGET TO REVIEW! Once again, no flames will be tolerated, but KIND constructive criticism is accepted. \*\*\_\_I know it's once again, not my best work, but I hope it was at least ok. I tried my best considering the fact I haven't been feeling well. Hopefully the next chapter should be\_\_up in about 2 weeks, but I can't make any promises. I do not procrastinate on my chapters, and if I'm late, please be patient with me. I'm working as fast as I can usually, and there is usually a reason that I am late. \_

\_Thanks for reading! :D\_

### 31. Chapter 31: Whole

\_I think this the quickest update I've done in awhile! :) Not only did I write this chapter in 6 days, but I'm also very happy with the way it turned out. I must have wanted Hiccup and Astrid back together as much as the rest of you. \_

\_So this is the final part of this storyline. It's a little long, because I had a lot to put in, but I don't think you'll all mind considering it has A LOT of Hiccup and Astrid goodness in this. The slap at the end of last chapter won't affect them for too long, but you'll soon see why she did it in the first place rather quickly. I put a lot of work into this to make sure it was a suitable ending for this storyline, which some of you have told me has made them cry! I apologise to anyone that I made cry, but at least I know it made an impact, but I hope you like this chapter.\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 31 â€" Whole<span>

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup's mind was racing as he glanced towards his wife in shock. If his cheek wasn't pulsing in agony, the young man would never have believed it. His wife had <em>slapped<em> him. With all the things he had expected upon his arrival home, this certainly \_wasn't \_one of them. Reaching up to touch his stinging cheek, Hiccup was amazed at the heat he felt there. It certainly hadn't been a gentle slap, that's for sure. There had been a lot of force put into it. As he tried to wrap his head around it, though, Hiccup watched as Astrid began to raise her hand once again. Reacting quickly, he jumped out of the way, eyes widening with shock before her hand could even make contact.

Dumbfounded, Hiccup struggled to find his voice as he watched

Astrid's hand twitch by her side, as if preparing to strike again. Alarmed by this, Hiccup quickly stammered over the thoughts racing through his mind.

"Astrid...I...I don't...ow," Hiccup trailed off, as his cheek pulsed with pain, "...I didn't...what was that for?!"

"\_What was that for?!\_" Astrid screamed, her voice echoing around the room. "Oh, I don't know Hiccup, why don't you tell me?!"

"I..." Hiccup stammered, his heart pulsing in his ears. "...I don't know..."

"You don't know?" Snorting angrily, Astrid shook her head in disbelief. "Tell me, Hiccup, \_have you\_ been missing for the past 2 weeks, or was I just imagining the pain and grief I've been going through?"

Hiccup's stomach dropped. "Well, no..." he confessed quietly, "...but Astrid, please, you have to let me explain...it wasn't my fault..."

"I've been here for the last 2 weeks, thinking you were \_dead!\_" Astrid exclaimed furiously, acting like Hiccup hadn't even spoken. "And not only me, but your kids as well; your kids!" she screamed furiously, her hand twitching dangerously near her axe. "You left us here thinking that you were never coming back. I thought I was going to have to raise a baby on my own...!"

"Baby?" Hiccup said weakly, his eyes gazing down towards Astrid's stomach, but before he could continue, Astrid's eyes had flashed dangerously once more.

"Do you mean to tell me that you were perfectly fine this entire time!" she screamed angrily, looking him up and down.

"Perfectly fine?!" Hiccup spluttered irritably, all traces of the earlier announcement erased from his mind as he lifted his leg to show the damage. "Does this look perfectly fine to you, Astrid? I was \_injured,\_ I couldn't come home!"

"And that stopped you from sending us word, did it?" Astrid snapped heatedly, picking up her axe, unfazed by Hiccup's furious expression. "Or did it never cross your mind that your family was worried sick?!"

"Of course it did!" Hiccup exclaimed, his heart constricting in his chest at these words. "The whole time I was stuck there, I was petrified for you!" Tears pricked at the corner of his eyes. "You have no idea how badly I wanted to send word" he said, his voice dropping dramatically. "I even went against orders and tried to fly home before my leg had barely healed! You think I would do that if I didn't care?!"

"I don't know, you tell me!" Astrid screamed, angrily throwing the axe, where it narrowly missed Hiccup and hit the opposite wall. "If you cared so much, why didn't you send word? You were obviously with people this whole time!"

"Because I couldn't!" Hiccup said, desperately, staring after the axe

nervously. Cautious, he reached out and took hold of Astrid's hand. He took it as a good sign that she did not throw it off, despite her chest heaving rapidly with anger. "Do you think I would just leave you without word if I was able to send a message...?"

"Well, I bloody well hoped you wouldn't...!"

"And I didn't!" Hiccup exclaimed in frustration. "I was found by the Chief of the Windfall Isles, Astrid. They don't have wild dragons on that island, nor did they have any sea worthy ships after that storm...!"

"And I'm supposed to believe that?!" Astrid said tearfully, tears spilling from her eyes before she could stop them. "I've gone 2 weeks thinking you were dead, Hiccup. I thought I was going to have to raise our kids without you." She sniffed loudly. "Do you have any idea what I've gone through? What we've all gone through?" she added weakly, all traces of anger disappearing from her voice.

"Astrid..." Hiccup said softly, as tears sprung to his own eyes "...I'm sorry. I never meant for any of this to happen." His hand hovered over Astrid's for a moment, before he gently took it in his own as he took a shaky breath. "If I had known how bad things were here..." he trailed off.

"But you didn't," Astrid replied, her voice barely audible. Squeezing the hand that was in hers, Astrid looked up at him, meeting his tear filled emerald eyes with her misty azure ones, before heaving a sigh. "Hiccup," she said softly, "I know it's not your fault that you couldn't send word, but that doesn't stop me from feeling so..." Astrid struggled to find the right words, "...angry...knowing you were alive this whole time..."

"Astrid-"

Astrid shook her head. "No, Hiccup, let me talk," she said, causing him to close his mouth and nod. "Hiccup, when we found Toothless's tail, we thought for sure you were dead. We were all trying to accept the fact...that we may never see you again. Do you know how hard that was for me?" she asked him tearfully. "For everyone?" Eyes burning with unshed tears, Astrid suddenly found herself looking away from Hiccup's burning stare. "I thought I'd lost you, Hiccup, and now...to find you alive...I-"

Astrid couldn't continue. As tears spilled from her eyes, deep racking sobs came up from her chest, causing her to emit deep rasping breaths, as she suddenly flung herself into Hiccup's arms, her shoulders shaking. Struggling to keep his own tears in check, Hiccup quickly wrapped his arms around Astrid's shaking form, pulling her close to him in a tight embrace.

"I'm sorry, Astrid, I'm sorry...I'm so sorry," Hiccup choked out; lifting his hand to stroke her messy blonde locks back from her wet cheeks. "I should have tried harder to get home...I should have stopped you all thinking I was...dead."

Astrid shook her head, tears still flowing freely down her cheeks. "What could you have done?" she asked misty eyed. "You were injured..."

"But I should have done something..." Hiccup protested, causing Astrid to reach up and press a finger to his lips.

"Hiccup, stop beating yourself up," Astrid said desperately. "If you said you couldn't help it, you couldn't help it, but..." She trailed off slightly, as she gazed down at her husband's bandaged leg.

"Hiccup, what happened to you?"

"The usual thing that happens to me," Hiccup answered with a sigh. "I was in the wrong storm at the wrong time, and being the human lightning rod I am, I got hit...twice," he added as an afterthought, causing Astrid's eyes to widen as wide as saucers.

"T...Twice?" she asked feebly, quickly casting her eyes to Hiccup's leg again. "But-"

"Well Toothless got the second one," Hiccup confessed, "but that just made matters worse..."

"Toothless!" Astrid exclaimed quickly, eyes glazing over with fear. "Is he-?"

"Shhh," Hiccup soothed gently, "he's fine, Astrid. I got the worst of the injuries," he added with a slight grin, which quickly vanished when he saw Astrid's narrowed eyes. He cleared his throat sheepishly. "Anyway," he continued quickly, "I was in the middle of the storm and it was bad."

Hiccup swallowed hard as he remembered the intensity of the storm. Astrid could feel the tremor pass through his spine as he shuddered.

"The lightning was intense," he said absently, eyes focused on Astrid. "Honestly, I'd never seen a storm like it...I was about to head back when...when I got hit. I barely knew where I was, especially when the next one hit Toothless. The last thing I remember is going into the ocean, before I blacked out..." he trailed off as a tremor of fear ran through his body once again. "The next thing I remember is waking up on the Windfall Isles; in quite a lot of pain mind you," Hiccup added with a wince.

Astrid frowned. "How-" she trailed off, swallowing heavily, "-how did they find you? You would have been miles out to sea..."

"Lucky for me they were nearby when I fell," Hiccup said gratefully, before he instinctively placed a hand to his head. "Not so lucky for my head, though. I fell and hit my head on a piece of debris from their boat," he explained as he saw Astrid's bewildered glance. "If they hadn't found me, I would have been dead. I had a burnt leg, cracked ribs and a crack in the back of my head by the time I got back to the island..." Looking down at his blistered leg, he sighed. "If it wasn't for this leg, I would have been home long ago" he said in irritation.

Wordlessly, Astrid reached out and gently took Hiccup's leg in her hands, carefully unwrapping the bandages. Biting his lip to suppress a hiss of pain, Astrid's eyes widened as the bandages fell away, revealing several nasty red blisters still thriving on his stump. The leg was still slightly red from the burns the lightning had caused, and a few of the blisters were still oozing pus and blood when

touched. Below the part of his leg that still remained, Astrid saw small fractures in his metal leg where the lightning had obviously cracked it. It was a wonder he was walking on it at all.

"It's a lot better than it was," Hiccup said gently, causing Astrid to start and look up at him. "When I first woke up it was a lot nastier than that I assure you. It'll get better. Of course it would have healed sooner if I'd just listened to the healer and hadn't tried to get home quicker." Hiccup bit his lip. "It was either rest, or try to make it home with a bad leg and possibly never make it home. But now I wish I'd tried anyway," he said miserably.

Taking her hands off his damaged leg, Astrid slowly stood up and went around to the back of his head, moving aside his hair to see the crack in his head. After a moment, she located it, a small line going along the edge of his skull, half healed over, but otherwise alright.

"That doesn't bother me anymore," Hiccup said with a shrug, knowing what Astrid was looking at. "It wasn't even that bad."

Astrid burst into tears. Bringing her hand up to her mouth, great racking sobs escaped from her throat, as tears began to flow down her cheeks unchecked. As her body began to shake violently, Astrid quickly collapsed onto the bed, before she flung her arms around Hiccup's neck, burying her head into his chest. Startled, Hiccup tensed for a moment, before he pulled Astrid closer to him, pressing his lips to her hair.

"Shhh," Hiccup whispered. "It's alright, Astrid, everything's going to be alright. I'm here. I'm right here."

"I was so scared, Hiccup," Astrid wept, her voice muffled as she kept her head buried in Hiccup's chest. "I thought I'd never see you again-"

"I know, Astrid," Hiccup croaked, "I'm..."

"Don't you dare say you're sorry!" Lifting her head to meet Hiccup's tearful gaze, Hiccup's stomach dropped as he saw tears dripping down Astrid's face like a waterfall. "You could have been dead." She sniffed. "If those people hadn't found you, you would have died, yet here I am accusing you of not caring..."

"Astrid, it's alright-" Hiccup tried to protest.

"You think this-" Astrid carefully touched the red mark on his cheek, "-is alright?" she asked incredulously. "I've been here for days, thinking I would never see you again...and Thor knows what you've been through...yet what do I do when you get home? I slap you!" Astrid's voice broke as a new sob escaped her throat. "How is that alright...?"

"Astrid!" Hiccup exclaimed quickly, causing Astrid to stop herself mid ramble. Looking up into Hiccup's tear filled eyes, Astrid's breath caught in her throat at the amount of love that was in her husband's eyes. "It's alright," Hiccup continued softly. "I forgive you; and do you know why?" Astrid shook her head, disbelief evident in her eyes. "Because I love you, and nothing you could do would ever make me not forgive you-" Astrid opened her mouth to protest.

"Sure," Hiccup said in agreement, wincing as he touched his stinging cheek, "you slapped me pretty hard, and I won't lie...it hurts-" He lowered his hand, and placed it on Astrid's cheek instead, a forgiving smile on his lips. "But I've spent these past few weeks, worrying about how you and the kids were, and honestly, you could have punched me, and I'd still be glad to be home...although you came pretty close with the axe..."

Astrid laughed, making Hiccup's smile grow wider, as he moved his hands to her face, thumbs brushing away the tears resting on her cheeks. Astrid held onto his hand, a small smile beginning to form on her own lips.

'The point is, Astrid, I don't care if you stay angry with me." Hiccup swallowed thickly. "Although I'd prefer if you didn't," he confessed quietly, causing Astrid to tighten her grip on his hand. "I just to be home with you and the kids, and somehow make it up to you all, knowing what you've all been through."

"You don't have to make it up to me," Astrid said softly, resting her head on Hiccup's. "I'm just glad you're alive, Hiccup. I...I never thought I'd see you again." Astrid smiled slightly, as she gently caressed Hiccup's cheek. "I love you," she whispered, as more tears began to drip down her face.

"I love you too," Hiccup said tearfully, and not wasting another moment, he pulled Astrid into his arms and kissed her as passionately as he could. Emitting a squeak in surprise, Astrid sat there frozen for a moment, before she quickly wrapped her arms around Hiccup's neck and kissed him back with as much passion as she would gather. Hands digging into her hair, Hiccup deepened the kiss further, his heart finally lifting after days of worry and beside him, Astrid felt the same. After what felt like hours, they finally broke the kiss with breathless smiles at each other, but they didn't break the contact they had.

"I'm sorry," Hiccup said wistfully, as he stroked Astrid's cheek. "I'm sorry that I worried you and the kids, I really am."

"It's alright," Astrid said, a little breathlessly, "you're here now." She reached up to tuck a loose hair behind Hiccup's ear, a genuine smile on her face. Looking back at her tenderly, Hiccup suddenly remembered something Astrid had said earlier, and he quickly looked up at her with an uncertain smile.

"Um..." he said nervously, "speaking of kids. Did...did you say what I thought you said earlier?"

Astrid blushed and looked down with a slight smile forming on her face. As she looked up at him again, she nodded; her smile widening as she did.

"Surprise," she said with a smile, taking a hold of Hiccup's hand and guiding it down to her still flat tummy. Eyes widening with shock, Hiccup's face soon broke into a goofy grin, as he looked at her, love filling his eyes once more.

"How far along?" he asked, beaming.

Astrid smiled. "About 8 weeks." Her smile faded slightly. "I...I

found out the day before you left."

Hiccup was quiet for a moment. "Why didn't you tell me?"

Astrid dropped her eyes from Hiccup's gaze. "It was meant to be a surprise," she said, her voice barely above a whisper. "I was going to tell you on our anniversary...but-"

'-but I never came home" Hiccup said with a sigh. "Oh gods, Astrid, I'm so sorry..."

'Would you stop saying you're sorry?" Astrid said crossly, as she looked up into Hiccup's eyes, beginning to fill with tears again. "It's not your fault. I should have told you when I found out."

"You didn't know this was going to happen, sweetheart," Hiccup pointed out. "You can't blame yourself." Hiccup ran his hand through his hair with a sigh. "I should have tried to come back when I knew something was wrong."

"Not with that leg," Astrid said, casting her eyes down to his blistered leg again. She quickly stood up. "I need to tend to that," she said quickly, making a move to pick up the bandage, only for Hiccup to grab hold of her hand and stop her.

"It can wait," he said gently. Looking from the leg to Hiccup's pleading eyes, Astrid slowly nodded before she sat down beside him, reaching up to stroke Hiccup's hair tenderly. Hiccup smiled.

"So-" he said with a chuckle, "-another baby, huh?" He reached up touch Astrid's cheek lovingly. "Congratulations."

Astrid smiled. "You're ok with it?"

"Why wouldn't I be?!" Hiccup exclaimed excitedly, causing Astrid to giggle. "I'm going to be a daddy again. It's the best news I've heard in days!" Meeting his wife's eyes once more, Hiccup smiled wider, as he rubbed Astrid's stomach, causing more tears to spring to her eyes. "How did the kids take it?"

"I haven't told them," Astrid confessed guiltily, lowering her eyes from Hiccup's piercing gaze. "I just didn't think it was the right time and..." Lifting her head up, Hiccup was taken aback to see more tears beginning to stream down her cheeks. Reaching up to brush the tears aside, Hiccup was surprised when Astrid pulled away.

"Astrid, what's wrong?" he asked anxiously, reaching to take her hand.

"I've been a bad mother lately, Hiccup," Astrid replied, her voice thick with tears. "The kids have been going through as much as I have, but...but they haven't even been with me..."

Hiccup nodded, unsurprised. "I had a feeling that was the case when I met them down at the docks with mum."

Astrid looked up, her eyes wide with surprise. "You've seen them already?" she asked quickly. "How...how were they?" She frowned suddenly. "Why were you at the docks?"

"Trader Johan brought me home, but I'll explain later," Hiccup said quickly, waving that conversation aside, before he took cupped Astrid's face with both his hands. "As for the kids, they were upset, but they're fine; as is mum. I promised I'd explain everything to them later. They've gone to bed." Astrid sniffed, and went to lower her eyes to the ground, before Hiccup lifted her chin to look into her eyes. "Siri was worrying about you, sweetie. She wasn't mad she wasn't with you."

"But-" Astrid swallowed as her throat burned with tears. "-But I thought you'd be mad because I wasn't taking care of them."

Hiccup sighed and gently kissed Astrid's forehead. "I had a feeling it might have been like that when I was told what was happening," he confessed. "You were upset, Astrid. Nobody expected you to be yourself lately, least of all me."

Hiccup placed a finger to her lips as she went to argue. "They were well looked after weren't they?" he asked with a knowing look to her.

"Yeah, but...I should have been the one looking after them!" Astrid protested.

"I'm not angry, sweetie," Hiccup said softly, as he pulled Astrid closer to him. "Grief...grief makes us act the way we shouldn't." He sighed. "I should know. The thing is you can't keep torturing yourself over this. The kids are just fine; stop beating yourself up for it. I wasn't myself on that island either" he admitted.

"What?-"

"I knew something was wrong, Astrid," he said. "All I wanted was to get home, but...knowing I couldn't; that was the worst thing."

"You're here now," Astrid said softly, laying her head on his shoulder.

Hiccup smiled. "I know," he whispered, as he pressed a kiss into her blonde locks. "And just in time for Siri's birthday, too."

Astrid's eyes widened and she bolted upright, guilt flowing through her body. "Siri's birthday!" she exclaimed. "I forgot all about it! Gods, I'm such a selfish idiot!"

"You're not selfish, Astrid," Hiccup said firmly, wrapping an arm around her shoulders. "It just slipped your mind."

"But you remembered!"

"I had three days on a ship to remember," Hiccup pointed out.

"But I have nothing for her," Astrid said in a panic, as her shoulders began to shake.

"\_I \_do," Hiccup reassured her lightly. "Trader Johan gave me something she is going to love, on the way home. Trust me; she's



going to love us for life."

"But -"

"But, nothing," Hiccup said. "Astrid, you've gone through more than I ever wanted you to go through lately. You need to \_rest\_." Hiccup's stomach dropped as he saw the dark circles protruding from underneath her eyes. "You're exhausted, Astrid; just rest."

"I..."

"What?"

"I haven't had much sleep lately," Astrid whispered.

"Neither have I," Hiccup said, as he gently helped Astrid lay back onto the pillows. "I'll be right here, Astrid. We'll talk more in the morning."

"But -"

"Sleep. I won't leave."

Astrid sighed, but suddenly found she didn't have the strength to argue. Eyes feeling heavy, she lay back onto the pillows, wrapping her arms around Hiccup's waist, before placing her head onto his chest, snuggling close to him. Hiccup wrapped an arm around her shoulders, before kissing her forehead. Astrid responded by snuggling even closer to him than was possible.

"I love you," she said sleepily, her eyes drifting closed.

"I love you too, \_min elsker,\_" Hiccup replied lovingly. "Just get some sleep."

Astrid opened her eyes a fraction, a small smile forming on her lips. "You've never called me that before," she said in a false accusatory tone.

"Well, there's a first time for everything," Hiccup joked.

Astrid chuckled, half asleep, before taking Hiccup's hand in hers and kissed it gently, eyes closing. Within moments, her body relaxed and not long afterwards her breathing steadied.

Hiccup sighed as he watched her. Never, in the long time he had known her, had he seen her look so fragile and miserable, even when Siri was missing. Stroking her hair softly, Hiccup closed his eyes, as he embraced the warmth of his wife beside him, eyes heavy with fatigue. He would make it up to her.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup woke up a few hours later; his leg and back both screaming in pain, but his cheek no longer throbbed when he touched it. Groaning quietly, he turned his head to look at Astrid who had barely moved since she'd fallen asleep. Her arm was still clutched to him tightly, and her head was resting on his chest as she snored lightly. Nothing could wake her now and for that Hiccup was grateful as he saw the exhaustion still clear underneath her eyes. Moving slightly,

Hiccup barely had time to catch himself before he almost fell off the tiny wooden bed, hissing in pain and irritation as he scraped his bared stump to the old wood. He's almost forgotten how uncomfortable wooden beds were since he got married.<p>

Hiccup quickly looked back as he heard Astrid stir in her sleep, incomprehensible mumblings coming from her mouth as she slept on. Quickly righting himself, Hiccup swiftly stroked Astrid's hair back softly, before placing a kiss into the same golden locks. Within a moment, her body relaxed and she fell silent in slumber once more, her breathing evening out as a small smile formed on her lips that made Hiccup's heart skip a beat. Obviously it had been a while since she'd gotten a restful night's sleep he noted anxiously.

Hiccup froze for a moment as he heard whispered voices coming from downstairs. Listening closely, he just caught Ansfrida's voice drifting up from the lower level. Hiccup frowned. \_What were they still doing up\_? He wondered, as he looked out the open shutters in the room at the moon, high in the sky. It had to be almost midnight and the village was usually all in their homes asleep by now, no matter what age you were. He heard Amund's voice join the conversation.

Looking back at Astrid, Hiccup slowly moved, and placed Astrid's arm down on the bed gently. When she didn't move, he gradually moved off the bed, and grabbed the bandage, wrapping it around his leg and fixing up his pant leg in the process. Hiccup jumped slightly as he heard Astrid stir beside him, a slight panicked sound emitting from her throat. Acting quickly, he quickly bent down and kissed her forehead softly, caressing her cheek until she relaxed again. When she didn't stir again, Hiccup quietly went over to the door and opened it slightly, peering out.

It was dimly lit downstairs, and as he squinted down the stairs he saw Astrid's parents sitting on the wooden couch downstairs, whispering quietly to each other; each of them with a mug of something in their hands. As they heard metal tapping on wood as Hiccup carefully came down the stairs, they quickly stood up.

"Hiccup," Ansfrida said in relief; a large smile lighting up her dimly lit face. As he came towards her, she held out her arms for him and before Hiccup knew it, had engulfed him in a strong hug, something that rarely occurred with his mother-in-law.

Before Hiccup could say anything, Ansfrida had let go of her son-in-law, the smile remaining on her face. "You have no idea how pleased we are to see you, lad," Ansfrida said softly, as she reached up to touch Hiccup's cheek. "We thought for sure we'd never see you again. Are you alright?"

"A bit sore, but on the mend," Hiccup replied quietly, looking up to the upper level to check he hadn't woken Astrid. Looking back to his in-laws, Hiccup sighed. "Ansfrida, Amund, I am so sorry that I've caused such a mess, but I was unable to either get home, or send a message..."

"You don't need to explain, son," Amund said quickly, as he clapped Hiccup's shoulder. "We know you would have sent word if you could. You don't have to explain it tonight."

"Thanks, Amund," Hiccup said appreciatively. "I promise I'll explain it all tomorrow, it's just..." he looked up toward the bedroom. "...I had to be with Astrid just now is all; and even she doesn't know the full story yet."

"How is she?" Ansfrida asked anxiously, following Hiccup's line of sight to the bedroom.

"Better," Hiccup said. "But I'm not sure how bad she was before, so I don't think I can really say..."

Hiccup watched as Ansfrida and Amund exchanged glances, and his heart plummeted at the dejected looks etched onto their faces.

"How bad was it?" he asked fearfully, sitting down across from them so he could get off his leg.

"It'd been getting worse," Ansfrida said softly, with a glance towards her husband. "When Astrid returned home from finding Toothless's tail"-

"Where is Toothless?" Hiccup interrupted suddenly. "Sorry Ansfrida, I just thought of him."

"He's over at your mother's, lad. He was catching up with Cloudjumper," Amund said.

"That's a good thing," Hiccup said with a nod, before he turned to his mother-in-law. "Sorry, Ansfrida."

With a nod to him, Ansfrida continued. "When Astrid came home, she...she collapsed. That's when we found out she was..." Ansfrida stopped mid sentence, unsure of whether or not to keep going.

"It's ok, Ansfrida, Astrid told me," Hiccup said, knowing what she'd been about to say. With a nod, Ansfrida went on.

Nothing prepared Hiccup for what his mother-in-law was about to say, as she began to explain how Astrid had come home in tears, revealing that she was pregnant and then having to tell her children about their daddy. Hiccup's eyes widened in shock as Ansfrida told him of what Siri had said to her mother upon hearing the news, and his eyes filled with tears.

"Siri actually said she hated her?" Hiccup asked in disbelief. "Is...is she talking to her yet?"

"They made up the same night" Ansfrida reassured him gently, as she patted his hand. "Siri was scared, Hiccup, the same as Leif."

Nodding soundlessly, Hiccup allowed Ansfrida to continue on as she told him of the meeting with the council and how Astrid reacted to his edict documents. Tears began to stream down Hiccup's face as she explained what Astrid had screamed in the middle of the village, to how they had found her later on, scrunched up in a ball in her room. Hiccup was barely listening by the time Ansfrida tearfully explained about her daughter's failed attempt to return home with the kids a few days before, leading up to how she was now. By the time

she had finished, Hiccup's cheeks were wet with tears and his heart constricted in his chest.

"I'm such an idiot," Hiccup said, his voice shaky. "I knew something was wrong, yet I didn't come home when everyone needed me. I should have tried harder to come home!"

"You couldn't have come home without hurting yourself more, son," Amund said sternly, patting the young man on the back. "If you had tried to come home on that leg on yours, you could have been dead, and what good have that done...?"

"I could have tried!" Hiccup looked up at his in-laws, his eyes puffy from crying. "There I was safe and recovering on an island, while my wife was tearing herself apart thinking I was dead. Astrid is the strongest person I know and knowing she's been like this..." Hiccup swallowed thickly. "...And my kids?" he said. "They should never have gone through that. None of you should have."

"The point is you're alive, lad," Amund said. "And that's all that matters; for you, and for all of us. Stop beating yourself up over something you can't change and move on."

"Astrid couldn't even go home, though, without feeling this way," Hiccup protested weakly, wiping the last of the wetness from his cheeks.

"And now you can take her home," Ansfrida said. "Pack up her stuff tomorrow and take them all home. Don't keep dwelling on something you can't change."

Hiccup thought for a moment. Lifting his eyes up to the bedroom, Hiccup bit his lip in thought. After a moment, he stood up.

"What are you doing?" Ansfrida asked him, her face contorted with confusion.

"I'm taking Astrid home," he said with a slight grin. "Better sooner than later, right?" Walking up the stairs, he suddenly stopped as he reached the top step. "Besides," he said with a painful groan, "if I sleep on a wooden bed for one more night, my back's going to give out. I doubt Astrid will even notice."

\* \* \*

><p>Astrid awoke to the feel of the sun's rays hitting her face. Mumbling slightly, she instantly turned away from the brightness irritating her corneas, only for her body to hit something solid. In a panic, Astrid's eyes snapped open, resulting in a slight groan of irritation as her eyes tried to adjust to the sudden change. As her vision cleared, her heart skipped a beat as she saw Hiccup fast asleep beside her, his chest slowly rising and falling as he slept, undisturbed by her sudden movement into wakefulness. A smile formed on her lips. <em>It hadn't been a dream</em>. Her heart lightening somewhat, Astrid soon found herself frowning as she took in her surroundings. This wasn't her bedroom at her parent's house. It was her and Hiccup's bedroom. How did I get here? She wondered, as she cast her eyes around the room.

Before she had time to dwell on that, though, she heard Hiccup begin

to move beside her. Turning her head, she watched as he slowly opened his eyes, before giving her a small smile as his eyes fell upon her face.

"Hey," she said with a smile, turning her body to face him.

"Hey," he replied softly, reaching up to rub her cheek gently. "How'd you sleep?"

She smiled contentedly. "Better than I have in days," she said, taking Hiccup's free hand in her own. "But, urgh..." She looked around the room, eyebrows furrowed in confusion. "How did we get home?" she asked, as her eyes landed on her satchel and axe by the door. "I'm quite sure I fell asleep at my parents place."

Hiccup chuckled. "You did," he replied, groaning slightly as he sat up. "But I couldn't stand sleeping on a wooden bed for one more night, so I brought you home."

Astrid raised her eyebrows. "You mean to tell me you managed to carry both me and my stuff all the way from my parent's house?" She lowered her eyes down to his leg. "On that leg?"

"Well...no," Hiccup confessed, as he turned his gaze to the door. "Your parents brought your stuff over, while I carried you." He chuckled slightly. "Wow, you can sleep like a rock!"

Astrid didn't laugh. Hearing that her parents had spoken to Hiccup, Astrid's face paled slightly before she turned away from Hiccup's gaze, her throat tightening.

"I'm guessing they told you what happened?" she asked quietly, turning her head back to meet Hiccup's concerned gaze.

Hiccup sighed. "Yeah, they did," he said softly, as he took Astrid's hands within his own. "Astrid, I don't think of you any differently," he reassured her, watching as tears sprang to her eyes. He reached up to cup her cheek, thumb brushing aside a tear as soon as it spilled over onto her face. "I would never have expected you to be strong and going about everything like nothing had happened."

"But I acted like I was the only one affected," Astrid whispered croakily. "I completely ignored everyone else's feelings."

Hiccup sighed, as he kissed her forehead tenderly. "Well, as much as that should annoy me, it doesn't," he confessed. "Grief makes you do that. I did it when my dad died, and apparently he did it when mum disappeared. We're even."

"But I lost my spirit," Astrid said, her voice thick with tears. "Annika said I was losing everything that made me, me." She sniffed loudly. "I was afraid of going back to the person I used to be."

"It would never happen," Hiccup said, certainly evident in his tone. He smiled widely at her as he stroked her cheek gently with his thumb. "I've known you a long time, milady, and eventually you would have come back to everyone." He kissed her forehead lightly. "I don't think 2 weeks is the best judge of anything."

A genuine smile formed on Astrid's lips, reaching her eyes in an

instant. It was the first real smile she had made in days and Hiccup knew it.

"I'd glad you have so much faith in me, babe," she said, a grin forming on her face. "I guess that's why I married you."

"I thought it was for my good looks?" Hiccup teased.

Astrid's smirk widened. "You wish," she said, before she quickly pushed him back down onto the pillows, causing him to yelp and clutch his leg in pain. Smirk disappearing off her face in an instant, Astrid quickly rolled her pant leg up and gasped at the sight of liquid seeping through the bandage. A few more blisters had burst.

"Well, at least they're healing" Astrid said, untangling herself from Hiccup and the bed covers. "I'll go get a new bandage and some ointment. I'll be right back." Stopping before she made a move towards the door, Astrid looked back at Hiccup with a soft smile that lit up her eyes like fireflies in the night. "Hiccup?" she asked softly.

"Yeah, Astrid?" he replied, looking up at her with a responding smile.

"I...I missed you," she said, a faint blush rising in her cheeks.

Hiccup's smile widened. "I missed you, too," he answered warmly, as he took Astrid's hands in his own, and carefully brought her face down to his level, meeting her lips in a tender kiss. Closing her eyes, Astrid responded back contentedly, her fingers winding themselves into Hiccup's hair, before he suddenly let up a hiss of pain as she leant her hand on his blistered leg.

"Sorry!" she apologised quickly, her expression sheepish. "I'll...I'll go fix that," she said, her face bright red as she hurried from the room, leaving Hiccup behind, chuckling in her wake. Shaking his head at the pain, Hiccup leant back up against the pillows, his eyes wandering around the room as he waited for Astrid to return. The room obviously hadn't been slept in for awhile, Hiccup noted with a pang of sadness, as a slight layer of dust had made its way over objects in the room. Sighing heavily, Hiccup opened one of the drawers beside the bed to see if there was anything to help with that. His stomach dropped slightly as his eyes fell on the remains of Astrid's locket, sitting in the drawer. Reaching in, Hiccup carefully brought it out, wary of the back piece that had completely come away. Hiccup wondered whether this was why Astrid was so hesitant to talk about what had happened over the past few weeks.

"I was hoping you wouldn't find that."

Hiccup jumped as he heard Astrid's voice from the doorway and he quickly tried to hide the locket remains, to no avail. Looking up at her wife, his heart sank as he saw the sadness in her eyes as she saw the locket.

"What happened?" he asked her softly, as she came into the room.

"The same thing that happened to me this whole time," Astrid sighed, sitting on the bed. "I got upset and I took it out on whatever I could find; which in this case happened to be my locket." She looked up at Hiccup with a dejected expression. "I'm sorry, Hiccup. I know how much work you put into that."

"It's easily fixed," Hiccup reassured her, as he turned the locket over in her hands. He looked up at Astrid. "When did it happen?" he asked her.

"Right...right after we read out your edict papers," Astrid said, tears pricking at her eyelids again. "I just...lost it and-" Astrid suddenly stopped and her eyes narrowed as she remembered something within those papers. She looked at Hiccup. "Hiccup, why did you write about me remarrying again?" she asked heatedly. "Did you seriously think I would ever marry again if I lost you?"

Hiccup dropped his eyes from her gaze. "I didn't think you would," Hiccup admitted with a sigh. "But I never wanted you to be closed to the idea is all. I wouldn't want you to be miserable the rest of your life."

Astrid opened her mouth to retort, but found she was no longer angry. Sighing loudly, she cupped Hiccup's chin and lifted his head to meet her gaze. "You are too kind hearted for your own good, Haddock" she said with a chuckle, making Hiccup smile. "And I guess that's why I love you."

"You guess?" Hiccup asked in amusement, as he took one of Astrid's hands and kissed it lovingly.

"Alright, it is," Astrid giggled, before she picked up the bandage she'd brought in from the ground. "Now, come on, let's fix up this leg of yours," she said. "There's a lot of people eager to see you."

\* \* \*

><p>"DADDY!"<p>

Hiccup and Astrid had barely stepped one foot out the door when they heard the screams of their daughter coming up the hill. Turning their attention in the direction of the village, Hiccup barely had time to register the small group of people following close behind Siri, when the little girl had flung herself into her father's arms, knocking him to the ground in the process.

"Woah, easy there, Seer!" Hiccup exclaimed with a laugh, as Siri hugged him so tight his ribs ached. Behind him, he heard Astrid giggle.

"I missed you, daddy," Siri answered, her voice muffled as she buried her head into his shirt.

Hiccup smiled. "I missed you too, baby," he replied softly, tucking a loose strand of hair behind her ear. "Now...are you going to let me up?"

Siri shook her head, not moving from her position. Hiccup smiled a little sadly seeing his daughter's clinginess, but he had to move;

his leg was hurting so much, he had to bite down his lip to avoid calling out.

"As much as I'd love to stay down here, sweetie, daddy's leg hurts," Hiccup said, gently prying his daughter's arms from around his neck, and taking her in his arms. "You'll just have to stay in my arms for the moment," he added, swinging her up into his arms as he sat up, resulting in a high pitch squeal from the young girl.

"Gods, Seer," Hiccup said with a groan, "what has your Aunty Annika been feeding you? You're as heavy as a dragon!" he teased.

"Hey!" his daughter protested with a giggle. Wrapping her arms around her father's neck, she gave him a quick peck on the cheek, resulting in a wide smile from Hiccup. "Anyway, daddy, it was Grandma who fed us last night. Blame her!" she giggled.

"Oh, thank you dear, I appreciate that," Valka said with a roll of her eyes as she approached, Leif firmly in her arms and the dragons close behind her. Seeing Toothless, Astrid's eyes quickly lit up, before she raced over to the Night Fury, who bowled her over in turn, making her laugh. Hiccup barely had time to laugh at the sight, when his son had wriggled out of his grandmother's arms and soon made a beeline for his father's, who quickly set Siri down, to pick up Leif instead.

"I love you, daddy!" Leif exclaimed merrily, as soon as he was in Hiccup's arms. "You never go missing again?" he asked hopefully, eyes wide with anxiety.

Hiccup's heart broke seeing the fearful look in his son's eyes, and near him he heard Astrid gasp. Without turning to her, Hiccup quickly took hold of his son's chin and lifted it up so that his green eyes met his own.

"I'll try buddy," Hiccup promised softly. "Alright?"

"Otay," Leif said quietly, causing Hiccup to smile, and kiss his son's auburn locks gently, before placing him back on the ground. As he did so, he looked back up to his mother, the smile never fading from his face.

"Hey mum," he said softly, as he wrapped his arms around her tightly. "Thanks for looking after them last night. How were they?"

"They were fine, dear," Valka answered, a smile forming on her own lips as she watched her grandchildren play. After a moment, she turned her attention back to her son, as she reached up to stroke his cheek softly.

"We're just happy to see you home, Hiccup."

Hiccup smiled, as he reached up to take hold of his mother's hand on his cheek. "I know, mum," he said with a smile.

"Hiccup!"

Hiccup quickly looked over his mother's shoulder, and his smile suddenly widened as he saw Fishlegs and the others hurrying up the hill, wide smiles upon all their faces. Before he could even lift a



hand in greeting, though, he was once again engulfed into a bone crushing hug, this time by Fishlegs.

"You are a sight for sore eyes, my friend!" Fishlegs said excitedly, tightening his grip on his friend. "We thought Gobber had been seeing things when he told us!"

"Oh, ok, Fishlegs," Hiccup choked out breathlessly, his ribs screaming in pain. "I may be alive \_now\_, but I won't be if you don't let my cracked ribs go!"

"Sorry, Hiccup!" Fishlegs said quickly, letting go of the young man in an instant. Able to breathe fully again, Hiccup took several gulps of air in order to stop the blackness that had started to engulf him.

"Sorry, Hiccup, I don't know my own strength," Fishlegs apologised guiltily, watching as Hiccup's colour returned to normal.

"Considering everything's that happened, I'd rather not lose my husband to a hug, please, Fishlegs," Astrid said, although her tone was amused.

"Yeah, and even though I like pain as the next person, I'd rather not see it inflicted on you," Ruffnut said, her tone full of sincerity. "I'd just glad you're home, Hiccup," she added, pulling Hiccup into a gentle hug, causing Hiccup's eyes to widen in surprise.

"Um, thanks?" Hiccup said uncertainly, as he awkwardly patted Ruffnut on the back, before she let go of him with a smile, quickly replaced by Tuffnut. With a nod to both of them, Hiccup was soon engulfed by more hugs from both Anna and Annika.

"You have no idea how glad we are to see you, Hiccup," Anna said in relief, as she smiled softly at him. "We were afraid we'd never see you again."

"Yeah, who else would I annoy?" Snotlout said with a shrug, but as Hiccup turned his attention to him, he saw a faint smile appear on his friend's lips. He nodded to him with a smile in return.

"So, what happened?" Annika asked curiously, as silence fell all around them. "And what's up with your leg?" she added as she watched Hiccup limp forward.

"I'll explain later," Hiccup said. "I'll call a meeting after lunch, and I'll explain it to everyone in one go. It's easier for everyone that way." He looked at Astrid with a smile, hand clasped with hers. She returned the smile.

Noticing the lull in conversation, Siri quickly abandoned her game with her brother and returned to her parents, hand clasped with Leif's, as she looked up at her parents with hopeful eyes.

"Dad?" she asked. "Now that you're back, can...can we go home?"

Astrid looked at Hiccup with a slight smile, who returned it with a nod. Seeing this exchange, Siri's hopes lifted and they continued to

do so, when her mother bent down in front of her, hand reaching up to stroke a strand of loose hair behind her ear.

"I don't see why not, sweetie," Astrid answered with a smile.  
"There's no point staying away from home now, is there?"

Siri shook her head, grinning from ear to ear. "Can we go now?" she asked hopefully. "I want to unpack my things."

"Well, we've got to-" Astrid started.

"I've got a few things to do before we meet at the Great Hall anyway," Hiccup interjected quickly, seeing Siri's face beginning to fall. Hearing Hiccup's voice, Astrid quickly stopped mid-sentence and turned her attention towards him, Siri doing the same. Hiccup smiled and placed a tender hand on Astrid's shoulder.

"Why don't you take the kids home and let them unpack, and we'll meet at the Great Hall later?" Hiccup suggested, with a smile towards Siri and Leif. "Besides-" Hiccup said in undertone to his daughter, "-I have a surprise for you that I need to get finished before we go. Don't want you seeing it, now do we?" he asked with a wink, causing Siri's eyes to light up with excitement.

Noticing this exchange, Astrid's eyes widened. "What exactly are you up to?" she asked, unable to stop a smile from forming on her lips. "I thought you said the surprise was already worked out?"

"Not entirely," Hiccup said with a grin. Quickly kissing Astrid on the cheek, he started to make his way towards the village. "I'll meet you at the Great Hall at lunchtime!" he called back cryptically.

"But where are you going?!" Astrid yelled in bewilderment, as she took hold of her children's hands.

"You'll see!" was all he called back. Shaking her head in disbelief, Astrid turned her attention towards the group, who all had identical looks of confusion plastered on their faces.

"Does anybody know what that was about?" she asked them.

They shook their heads.

"Yeah, me neither" she said. "But I better not catch him on Toothless," she added anxiously, standing on tip toes to see where he and the Night Fury had gone too.

"Has he told you what happened yet?" Annika asked gently.

"Not all of it," Astrid replied with a slight smile. "He'll explain it all later. But what I do know..." Astrid sighed, "...it wasn't his fault."

"I didn't think it would be," Annika said gently. "Are you ok, though?" she asked, placing a hand to her shoulder.

"I will be," Astrid said, with a smile to her friend. Feeling a tug on her hand, Astrid quickly looked down at her son, his face pouting in annoyance, as he tried to pull her in the direction of the house,

making her and Annika laugh.

" You go and take them home," Annika said with a laugh, watching Siri and Leif's impatient expressions. "I'll go and spread the word about the meeting or else you'll have the village on your doorstep within the hour."

\* \* \*

><p>"I don't think I've <em>ever <em>seen this many people in the Great Hall in my life," Astrid said incredulously, as yet \_another\_ person stepped on her foot. "Oi!" she yelled after them, "do you mind?!"

"Sorry, Astrid!" they called back.

Hiccup chuckled from his seat beside her. "What do you expect?" he asked her. "The whole village showed up to find out what happened to me. I just wish they weren't as nosy as they were. It shouldn't have taken an hour to explain!"

Astrid snorted. From the time the meeting had began, it had taken a good hour before the whole story had been explained, thanks to a number of nosy, and sometimes ridiculous questions from the townspeople that nobody even needed to know! By the time Hiccup had finished, his throat was as sore as his leg, which was throbbing underneath him, and he was glad to sit in his Chief's chair away from everybody, but his wife and friends. His kids were off playing having heard enough of what happened.

"Well you had no idea how bad they were when I came back," Astrid said quietly, scanning her eyes around the hall. "I know they wanted to know what had happened, but they can be quite nosy. Snotlout was on the verge of challenging them at one point."

Hiccup shook his head angrily. "I know we're a nosy lot, but they had no right to bother you like that. I should tell them off right now."

"Don't bother," Astrid said softly, placing her hand over Hiccup's. "They know now and they'll leave us alone."

"You think?" Hiccup asked her dryly. He sighed. "I should have just flown home on Toothless when I had a chance. I could have avoided this whole thing if I had!"

"Why didn't you?" Annika asked, from her seat next to Astrid. "Doesn't Toothless's tail lock up? Couldn't you have used that?"

Hiccup shook his head. "No, it's too dangerous to use the lock-on tail for long amounts of time because Toothless can't control his direction," he explained. He looked out over the hall where Toothless was playing a game of catch dragon with the kids. He smiled, before turning his attention back to Annika. "I would have made a more controllable tail, but not only can I not stand on this leg for more than an hour at a time, but Toothless wouldn't have flown home without me." He looked down at his bandaged leg. "Although, we \_were\_ close to disobeying orders and flying home regardless of this." He gestured to his leg.

"You're bloody lucky you didn't," Astrid said sternly. "And you won't be flying on Toothless anytime soon if I have anything to say about it."

"I should hope not," Lagetha said, as she squeezed her way over. Seeing Hiccup's bewilderment expression, she gestured to his leg. "You won't be going anywhere on Toothless with that leg for at least another week, Hiccup; not if I have to say anything about it. If you don't rest it, it won't heal properly and that leg is bad enough as it is. Oili was right about that." The healer turned to Astrid with a smile. "Make sure he stays at home and rests, dear, or he'll \_really\_ have problems."

"Don't worry, I'll make sure he stays in bed," Astrid said with a mischievous glint in her eye. "One way or another."

Hiccup blushed bright crimson at the implication, but he grinned at her despite it. "Oh, I'm sure you will milady," he said with a chuckle, causing her to turn red in turn.

Pretending she hadn't heard that, Lagetha cleared her throat, before nodding her head to Astrid's belly. "How are you going?" she asked her gently. "Everything ok?"

Astrid smiled. "I'm fine," she said cheerfully, touching her still flat stomach. "Hardly any morning sickness at all this time."

"That's a nice change," Hiccup chuckled, as he rubbed her belly with a proud smile. "I can't believe I came back to this!" he said readily, making Astrid smile tearfully. Hiccup returned it with a kiss of her hand, before his brows suddenly furrowed slightly and he looked around the hall.

"What's wrong?" Astrid asked, anxiously, her eyes scanning the room for any problems.

"It's alright, Astrid," Hiccup reassured her, tightening his grip on her hand. He looked up at Lagetha. "Have you seen Johan anywhere, Lagetha?" he asked her.

"Johan?" she asked, eyebrows narrowed in confusion. "No, sir, I haven't. Do you want me to find him?"

"No," Hiccup said, scanning his eyes around. "It's just he has Siri's birthday present. He was fixing it up before he brought it is all. I want to give it to her before it gets too late."

"I could go find him if you want, Hiccup?" Fishlegs asked Hiccup, as he went to stand up.

"No need," Hiccup said quickly, standing up. "He's just coming in now." He nodded towards the door, and he quickly waved his arms in order to get the traders attention. After a moment searching the hall, he quickly spotted Hiccup and the others and made his way over, Gobber following close behind.

"Why was Gobber with him?" Astrid asked, watching the two men make their way over.

"He was helping fix up her present," Hiccup grinned, as he gestured to Toothless to come over. Seeing his rider, Toothless quickly hurried over without question.

"Are you going to tell me what this present is?" Astrid probed.

"You'll see" Hiccup said, as Johan and Gobber reached them.

"Sorry we're late, Hiccup, we were just making sure it was good enough for the lass" Gobber said, as he handed the item over to Hiccup. Seeing what it was, Astrid gasped loudly and looked at Hiccup with a wide smile.

"Think we should call everyone to attention?" he asked her, grinning. She nodded with a wide beam. He turned to Toothless.

"Bud, a little help?"

Toothless roared loudly over the noise in the hall, silencing everyone immediately. Seeing her father call everyone to attention, Siri quickly made her way over, Leif's hand clasped in hers, Lennart close behind her.

"Thanks, bud," Hiccup said gratefully, stroking the dragon's head softly, before he turned to the throng of Vikings. "As some of you may know, I didn't just call you here this afternoon to explain what happened to me these recent weeks. I also called you here this afternoon because with a stroke of luck, I returned home just in time for my little girl's 9th birthday." Siri beamed as her father looked down at her with a loving smile, which he returned. "And in honour of her birthday, I managed to find a present for her on Johan's ship on the way home, something she's been wanting for years from her mother and I-" Siri eyes widened as she watched her father take the object from his chair, and hid it behind his back. "Seer," he said softly, "your mum and I were not going to let you have one until next year, but given the circumstances, we're giving this to you now." Taking the item from behind his back, he presented it his daughter, a proud smile forming on his face. "Happy birthday, baby."

Siri gasped in shock as her father presented her with a training axe. It was a small silver training axe, only slighter longer than the length of her chest, making it easier to carry and throw for someone her age and size. It was polished and finely made, and made a soft \_swishing \_noise as you moved it back and forth. Looking closer Siri noticed that her name had been carved into it on the handle, and it looked as if it had just been completed. To top it all off, wrapped neatly around the top of the handle was a red bow; Siri's favourite colour. It was magnificent.

Siri looked up at her parents with tears swimming in her bright blue eyes. "Thank you, thank you, thank you!" she squealed excitedly, as she flung her arms around her parents waists, being careful to avoid sticking them with the axe. "It's amazing!"

"You're welcome, Seer," Hiccup said happily, tears of joy filling his own emerald eyes. "I thought you'd like it."

"I love it!" she exclaimed joyfully, hugging her parents again. "Does

this mean I can start training with you now, mummy?" she asked Astrid, looking at her mother with hopeful eyes.

Astrid smiled, and stroked her daughter's blonde hair back. "It sure does," she replied. "We'll start tomorrow if you want."

Siri nodded, a large grin spreading from ear to ear, before she turned to Johan and Gobber who were still behind her.

"Thank you, Johan," she said gratefully, as she gave the trader a hug. "Thanks Uncle Gobber!" giving him a hug as well.

"It was nothing, lass," Johan said with a smile.

"I just helped with the engraving, Seer," Gobber said with a chuckle.

"Can I test it out now?" she asked eagerly, turning to her attention back to her parents.

"Not in this crowded hall, you're not," Astrid said quickly, eyes widening with fear. "Wait until tomorrow, sweetie."

"The lass can use the targets at the back of the hall," Gobber said, with a gesture behind them. "I'll help her if you want. I showed Hiccup how to use an axe."

"Please, mummy?" Siri begged. "I'll be careful I promise."

"Alright," Astrid agreed with a sigh. "But be careful not to hit anyone. The whole town's in here."

"Oh, come on, Astrid. You think I'd let her hit anyone?" Gobber said with a shake of his head. "Come on, Seer."

"Don't even think about touching the axe if you go with her, Leif," Hiccup interrupted them quickly, watching Leif eye off the axe with interest. Hearing his father's stern voice, he quickly jumped and nodded to him, before leaving with Gobber, and Siri, who quickly stopped and turned her head towards Lennart.

"You coming, Lennie?" she asked with a grin, who nodded and quickly followed her.

"You won't hit me, will you?" Hiccup and Astrid could hear him ask nervously, causing the couple to burst into fits of laughter.

"Take after Snotlout he doesn't," Astrid remarked in amusement, before she suddenly jumped at the feel of something cold against her chest. Quickly looking down, she gasped slightly as she watched Hiccup place a now repaired locket back around her neck, where it sat comfortably on her chest. Taking it in her hand, she saw the back had been reattached and was easily opening and shutting once again, and the scratches were barely visible. Opening the locket up, she saw the hairs of Siri and Leif had been replaced already. Her eyes filled with tears as she noticed this.

"That's what I was doing when you took the kids home earlier," she heard Hiccup explain, as he wrapped his arms around her waist from

behind her. She turned her head around so that she could see his eyes. "I knew you would want it fixed now that...now that everything's settled down again."

"Why did you fix it though?" she asked quietly, lowering her eyes from Hiccup's gaze. "I smashed it. I don't deserve to have it back, especially after I slapped you last night."

"No harm done there," he replied, with a kiss to her cheek. "I don't even have a mark," he added, with a touch to his cheek. "Besides," he continued, "it's not like you broke this on purpose."

"At the time I did," she pointed out, as she turned the locket over in her hands.

"Well...yeah, I guess so," Hiccup admitted. "But you still deserve to have it back." Hiccup lowered his hands with a wide smile down to Astrid's stomach. "In time for the new baby's hair to be placed in it beside their sister and the other's" he added with a chuckle.

"If they have any hair," Astrid teased, but she smiled at him anyway. "Thanks, babe," she said softly. "I love you."

"I love you, too," Hiccup replied affectionately, as he cupped Astrid's cheek in his hand and brought her head up to meet her lips with his own. Closing her eyes, Astrid willingly responded as she wrapped her arms around Hiccup's neck, pulling him closer to her, as she kissed him back with as much passion as she had. She giggled as Hiccup soon lifted her off the ground, grateful that nobody was paying them any attention, and after what felt like hours, he gently placed her back on the ground with a smile, as he stroked her cheek warmly.

"I'm sorry for everything I put you through, Astrid," he said again, so softly, Astrid barely heard him. "I never wanted you to think I was dead."

"I know," Astrid replied with a smile, as she kissed his forehead. "It's not your fault you're a human lightning rod" she went on, making Hiccup chuckle slightly, "but Hiccup-?"

"Yeah, Astrid?"

"Try to make sure it doesn't happen again"

"You got it, milady."

\* \* \*

><p><em>So, there you have it, the final part of this storyline :) I hope this chapter was a suitable ending for you all, but I certainly enjoyed writing it, especially when I had no writer's block for once! I know there were a few things I didn't address in this chapter as well, and it was mainly because of the already great length of it, and lack of flow, including the fact that both Siri and Leif both know their mother is pregnant as Valka told them the night Hiccup returned, as well as a few other things, but just know they would have been addressed. Astrid too, is a little bit more affected by everything's that's happened than she shows as well and this will be addressed in future chapters, but it won't take precedence in the

chapters. <em>

\_In this chapter, Hiccup calls Astrid 'min elsker'. This is just a shortened version of 'min sanne elsker' which of course means 'my true love', so it just means 'my love', something he has not directly said in an informal conversation towards her before :) \_

\_So, next chapter is going to be a lot of more light hearted and takes place 3 months after this storyline, at Snoggletog. Although Astrid is pregnant at this time, it is NOT a pregnancy storyline, but a Snoggletog one, and it's going to be quite funny. \_\_\*\*Bored of the usual Snoggletog traditions on Berk, Hiccup decides to have a Snoggletog present hunt for the children on the island, but when the competition heats up, he soon realises that, children or not, they are still Vikings, and competitiveness soon runs wild! \*\*\_\_I'm really looking forward to this chapter, because not only is it going to be fun, but I get to introduce the rest of the gang's children you haven't really met yet, like Kelda and Eric, as well as Anna's other 2 kids. Hopefully this should be posted by the end of the month :) \_

\_Ok so, \_\_\*\*DON'T FORGET TO REVIEW! Remember once again, though, that NO FLAMES will be tolerated, although KIND constructive criticism is accepted. \*\*\_\_I put a work of work into this chapter and I'm aware that a few things were not addressed, but would have been eventually. Next chapter should be up by the end of the month! I just need a break for a few days due to the fact I put so much energy into finishing this chapter and I'm exhausted.\_

\_Thanks for reading! :D\_

## 32. Chapter 32: Snoggletog Hunt

\_Yes, I know, I'm late. I'm sorry guys, but this chapter turned out a lot harder to write than I expected, and I had writer's block like you wouldn't believe. This chapter didn't quite turn out the way I wanted it to, and it's long, again, but I'm mostly happy with it, despite everything, and it's a lot more light-hearted than the previous few chapters. \_

\_So, this chapter is about a new idea that Hiccup comes up with to stop the village kids from driving their parent's nuts! It starts out fairly fun, but then it gets fairly competitive, and Siro's aim to impress and please everyone causes problems for her. It's a part of her I've been trying to show for a while, so it's good to get to show a weakness of hers. You also get to know Kelda, Eric and Sigmund better in this chapter too, with them mainly been in the background in previous chapters. Many of you will also like the fact that Astrid is back to her old self, mostly, in this chapter too, with only a small part referencing the previous chapters. \_

\_Anyway, on with the chapter!\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 32 â€" Snoggletog Hunt<span>

\* \* \*



><p>"Leif Hiccup Haddock, you get back here right now!"<p>

Leif just giggled, as his mother, trying in vain to catch him, lunged forward, only for him to suddenly skitter off to one side. Siri howled with laughter as Astrid rose from the floor, flustered, and red with annoyance. Seeing her daughter laughing at her younger brother's actions, Astrid threw a scowl in her direction.

"Don't you join in with him, young lady!" Astrid said in exasperation, positioning herself to catch her son as he raced by again. "I have enough to deal with!"

"He's just excited, mum," Siri said with a grin, watching her brother run around the couch. "You do know Snoggletog is one week away, don't you?"

"I'm well aware of that, Siri, but thank you for reminding me," Astrid replied dryly, attempting to scoop the little boy up from the floor. "Like your brother doesn't have enough energy as it is, without being excited over this too."

"Might get worse when my new sister arrives," Siri said with a grin, casting her gaze down to her mother's slightly protruding belly.

"No sister!" Leif said, stopping momentarily to look up at his sister. "It a brother!"

Seizing the opportunity, Astrid quickly stepped up behind her son, before scooping him up into her arms, Leif kicking and screaming in protest at having been pulled away from his fun.

"Let me down!" the boy screamed, his face reddening with anger, as he stretched out for the floor. "Wanna help with Snoggietog!"

"No, I said!" Astrid said firmly, keeping her arms firmly around the toddler's waist. "You've done enough helping for one day, buddy." She sighed as she looked around the mess in the room. "And by that I mean making more of a mess for me," she added. Siri giggled.

"Don't you go giggling," Astrid said, turning her attention to the 9 year old. "Leif isn't the only culprit here, is he?" She looked from her daughter to the mess of toys by the little girl's feet. Siri pouted.

"But mum, we're bored," Siri whined, looking at towards her mother. "We've helped with the decorations, and now we have nothing to do."

"How about cleaning up this mess?" Astrid suggested, gesturing to the mess on the floor around her. "I can't walk one step without tripping over something." Almost on cue, Astrid stepped forward to pick up a broom by the door, only for her to trip into it with a grunt of annoyance as she held out an arm to stop herself from falling. As she did so, though, Leif took his chance to escape his mother's tight grip, and ran off as soon as his feet hit the ground.

"Leif!"

Hopping up from her seat, Siri went charging after the little boy,

only for him to suddenly stop beside the kitchen table. Unable to stop in time, Siri smacked into it, sending dishes flying off its surface with a clatter to the floor, while she hissed loudly at a bump on her elbow. Beside her, Leif was staring up at his sister wide eyed and howling with laughter as he watched the scene unfold.

Astrid stood there, her eyes focussed on the new mess upon the floor, before she slowly raised her gaze up to her children, who were standing there frozen and guilty eyed as they glanced towards their mother.

"That's it!" Astrid yelled angrily, her eyes glued to the mess. "You're going to help your dad in the plaza. Surely you can't do any damage out there!"

\* \* \*

><p>"Here?"<p>

"No, a little bit higher."

"Here?"

"That's better."

"Are you sure?" Snotlout asked, squinting up at the tree. "It looks too high to me."

Hiccup frowned and followed Snotlout's line of sight, only to see the wreath Fishlegs was hanging was barely noticeable from where he was standing.

"Hmm, I think you're right," Hiccup agreed slowly. "Fishlegs!" he called out. "That does need to be a little bit lower!"

"Sure thing, Chief!" he called back, gently manoeuvring Meatlug lower towards the ground.

"How many more of these things are we putting up?" Snotlout asked frowning. "This place looks as if a dragon threw up decorations." Hiccup laughed.

"Hiccup!"

Hiccup fell silent as his wife's voice pierced his ears. Paling slightly at the annoyance in her voice, Hiccup slowly turned around to see Astrid and the kids hurrying towards him, Siri and Leif's hands gripping their mother's tightly, guilt etched upon their faces. Looking up from his children's guilty expressions to his wife's annoyed one; Hiccup quickly put two and two together.

"What have you done to your mother this time?" Hiccup asked his kids with a chuckle, before Astrid quickly silenced him with a look of irritation.

"Your children are driving me up the wall, that's what!" Astrid exclaimed in annoyance. "They've been crazy \_all\_ morning!"

"Oh, so they're \_my\_ children now, are they?" Hiccup said with a grin.

"They are when they're driving me crazy," Astrid said, unable to resist a smile. "Leif is hyper enough as it is, without Siri joining in with him! You should see the state of the house!"

"What have you two been doing?!" Hiccup exclaimed, eyes widening in surprise at their sheepish grins. "I thought I asked you to help your mum with the decorations, not to destroy the place!"

"We did that already," Siri said quickly. "Then we made a mess." she added with a guilty giggle.

Hiccup shook his head in amusement. "What am I going to do with you two?" he asked with a laugh. "Alright," he said, gesturing towards the decorating happening behind him, "why don't you go and help everyone else out here? There's still plenty to do."

"Ok!" both kids said simultaneously, before they both rushed off to join Lennart, Sigmund, Kelda and Eric, who were also helping wherever they could. Seeing the number of children in the plaza, Astrid raised her eyebrows in surprise.

"I don't think I've ever seen this many kids in one place before," Astrid said incredulously, casting her gaze in all directions. "No wonder the place looks so..." She trailed off thoughtfully. "...colourful." she finished slowly, for lack of a better word for the explosion of colour around the place. Hiccup chuckled nervously.

"Yeah, it's a bit much-"

"Dragon barf more like it," Snotlout mumbled.

"-but we had no choice," Hiccup continued, throwing a disgruntled look in Snotlout's direction. "It seems like every second parent on Berk is asking for help in distracting their kids this year," Hiccup sighed, with a quick glance towards 4 year old Kelda, who was standing behind her father on Meatlug, helping with the decorations. "Even Kelda is driving Fish and Ruff nuts; and she's a quiet one!"

"Len and Sig are too," Snotlout said with a groan. "Len's never been a trouble maker, yet Anna caught him raiding his presents in our room yesterday. I swear we need to do something for the kids this year, as well as us."

"Only way to distract this lot is if we use up all their energy," Astrid said with a slight yawn. "And when you do that, then it might be a good idea," Astrid frowned, as she watched Hiccup's go blank suddenly, eyes staring off into the distance. "Hiccup, are you ok, babe?" she asked him worriedly.

" Huh?" he asked, coming back to the present to see Astrid and Snotlout's concerned gazes on him. "Oh, sure, sweetheart, I'm fine," he said, as a grin began to spread across his face. "I think I may have an idea."

\* \* \*

><p>"A present hunt?" Astrid asked sceptically, eyes focused on the

plans resting on Hiccup's desk.<p>

"Why not?" Hiccup answered with a grin. "You're the one who said we needed to use the kid's energies. Besides," Hiccup looked up at Astrid, his eyes gleaming with excitement, "it'll be fun!"

"For you or the kids?" Astrid asked with an answering grin at Hiccup's enthusiasm. "How are even going to do this?"

"Easily," Hiccup said cheerfully. "See?" he said, nodding to the paper in front of him where his notes were barely intelligible. "We'll have the hunt in three stages." He pointed to the paper without looking up. "It will get harder each round and only the top scorers will win each time-"

"What's the age range?" Astrid interrupted quickly, squinting at his notes. "I thought you said Leif could play too."

"He can," Hiccup said with a nod. "The younger kids can pair up with older siblings or with another group, as long as it's no more than 6 to a group, to find presents hidden around the village. It will get harder each round of course," Hiccup added hurriedly, as he scribbled down a few more notes. "I was thinking that we'll start in the Great Hall; then have it in the village; before the final round is in the forest. This way it's a wider area and the kids can get all their energy out."

"And when will we be having this hunt?" Astrid asked.

"On three separate days," Hiccup answered absently, without looking up from the paper. "Starting 3 days from Snoggletog and ending on Snoggletog Eve," He looked at Astrid. "I'm still working out the rules."

"Sounds like you've worked out \_a lot,\_" she replied in amazement. She gestured to the paper with raised eyebrows. "You got all this just from what I said?"

"Well, Snotlout too," Hiccup said cheerfully, as he stood up from the desk. "But the point is, we did need a new tradition, and I think this might just be the thing!"

"I think it's an awesome idea!" Siri interrupted from the floor, where she was playing with Midnight. She looked at her parents, a grin spread from ear to ear upon her face. "We never get to anything, except decorating at Snoggletog. It sounds like so much fun!" She looked at Leif, listening intently to the conversation. "What do you think, Leif?" she asked him.

"It sound cool!" the little boy said eagerly, green eyes widening with excitement.

"See?" Hiccup said, with a glance towards his wife. "I told you it was a good idea."

"Alright, you win," Astrid said with a smile. "Looks like we're having ourselves a present hunt."

"It's not a present hunt, mummy," Siri said. "It's a \_ Snoggletog\_ hunt."

"When she's right, she's right," Hiccup said with a grin.

Astrid rolled her eyes with a laugh. "When did I become the only adult in this family?"

\* \* \*

><p>"The game will begin here, and will be in three stages," Hiccup explained to a large crowd. "The first round is here in the Great Hall," he elaborated further, tapping his stick to the map behind him, "where a number of items, such as toys and other things are hidden everywhere." Putting the stick down, Hiccup stepped off the raised platform in the hall he was on and swept his arm across the hall, the eager eyes of the village children following his every move. "Now, when I say everywhere," Hiccup continued, a grin spreading across his face, "I mean <em>everywhere<em>." He looked over towards Gobber and the others, his grin becoming larger by the second. "Gobber and the rest of us have spent the week in here, hiding these items as best as we can, so don't leave any place unchecked!-"

"That's an understatement; I don't even remember where I even hid some of them," Gobber muttered to Valka, who bit her lip to stifle a laugh that was building in her throat.

"-Now," Hiccup continued, sweeping his eyes around the hall, "the point of the game is to find as many items as you can around the Great Hall until everything has been found. The people or groups will the highest number of items will then immediately move onto the next round-"

"How many people will be out each time, sir?" Lennart piped up from beside Siri.

"Well..." Hiccup said slowly, consulting his list of names. "...since there are 45 children who have signed up to play, including 6 groups, that works out to be roughly 15 children who will be out each round... give or take a few others if the winners are a part of a group." Looking up from his list, Hiccup gave the crowd of excited children a wide smile. "It just depends on who are the winners of each round."

"What will happen to the kids who get out?" asked an older girl from the back of the hall.

"You will all get a prize for playing the game, but you will be able to help out with hiding the items the following day," Hiccup explained. "Just because you're out doesn't mean you can't stay apart of the game. Now," Hiccup said carefully, as he looked around at every face in the hall, "before we begin, we need to go through a few ground rules. This may be a game, but that doesn't," Hiccup emphasised clearly, "mean that cheating will be acceptable. If anyone is caught cheating, you will be immediately disqualified-"

"How can you cheat?" Siri asked, bewildered, causing a number of eyes to turn to her. "I mean, I thought it was just a game where you find hidden items? How can you cheat?"

"Why, are you thinking of cheating, Siri?" an older girl asked with a

giggle, causing the hall to erupt with laughter. Siri flushed, but looked up at her father, unperturbed, who gave a chuckle.

"There aren't many ways you can cheat, no," Hiccup answered with a laugh, "but there are still rules." He turned to Astrid with a loving smile, who returned it as she stepped forward, rules in hand.

"In order to make this a fair game," she said sternly, as she looked out towards the older children, "we've established that no one is allowed to steal an item that has already been collected by another child, even if you were there first. It's all fair game until it's in your basket, I'm afraid."

"In other words," Hiccup interrupted, as the excitement began to build, "I want you to treat this like it is; a game. It is not," Hiccup stressed, looking towards his daughter standing in front of him, "-a competition."

"Oh come, on!" Groans erupted throughout the hall, mostly from the older kids. Behind Hiccup, Astrid and Snotlout rolled their eyes, as Siri and Lennart's younger brother, Sigmund snorted at the notion.

"We're competing against each other, daddy," Siri said with a roll of her eyes, "that sounds like a competition to me!"

"It isn't fun if it isn't a comp!" 5 year old Sigmund agreed, earning him a glare off his older brother.

"It is just a fun game for you all to get your energy out," Hiccup insisted in frustration, hearing the children's moans. "It is not a competition."

"You keep telling yourself that, babe," Astrid said loudly, causing the entire throng of children to laugh, which in turn, made Hiccup's face turn red.

"Whose side are you on!" he exclaimed with a stutter.

"The side of fun," Astrid answered dryly, causing the hall to echo with laughter again.

"Alright, alright, you don't need to pick on me," Hiccup said, shaking his head in amusement. "Can I have everyone who's joining the competition," he emphasised the word greatly, "to go to the back of the hall and get ready with your groups, if you have one. Gobber," he nodded to the blacksmith, "will sound the horn when the game is about to begin."

There was a flurry of activity as a great number of enthusiastic children all thronged to the back of the hall to meet up with their groups; if they had one; while the others got their game faces on. Siri quickly took hold of her brother's hand, and carefully pulled him to the front of the group, joining Lennart, Sigmund, Kelda and Eric; the last two having no older siblings; so were therefore allowed to join Siri's small group.

"I have to admit, this was a great idea," Anna said, as her and Astrid watched the kids ready themselves for the start. "It's kept the kids out of my hair at least, anyway." She groaned slightly, as

she moved her one month old son, Bjorn, into a different position. "Thor knows I've needed it," she added, looking down at her son's peaceful face as he slept on.

"How is he?" Astrid asked her, casting her eyes down to the slumbering baby in her friend's arms.

Anna shook her head with a small smile. "He takes after his father," she said, as a mischievous grin formed on her lips. "Loud and obnoxious."

"I heard that," came Snotlout voice from nearby, causing both women to snort loudly, before busting into fits of laughter.

"Of course, he happens to hear that," Astrid said quietly, throwing a grin in Hiccup and Snotlout's direction. "I hope it this," she nodded to the chattering children, "doesn't disturb the baby, though."

"Well, we're about to find out," Anna said quickly, watching as Gobber walked over to the platform, horn in hand.

"Vikings take your positions," Gobber said slowly, as he leisurely brought the horn up to his mouth, "and... go!" He blew the horn loudly.

It was pandemonium as children ran in every direction, screaming and giggling as they raced around to find their first items. Taking her brother's hand, Siri ran off as fast as her legs could carry her, eyes darting around the hall for any sign of a hidden toy, while the rest of her group, ran after her, eyes peeled for the objects themselves. It only took a few moments for something metal to catch Siri's eye.

"I got a headband!" she screeched excitedly, as she quickly dropped it in her basket, before she continued running.

"I got a dragon doll!" Kelda giggled loudly, from nearby, holding the item up over her head. Seeing another little girl eyeing her off, the 4 year old suddenly squealed with laughter, and practically skidded towards Siri, unceremoniously dumping the little doll into the older girl's basket, before wheeling around and heading in the opposite direction, Leif following his friend's lead.

"That's my girl!" Ruffnut yelled cheerfully from the side of the hall, holding her one year old son Ludovik tightly in her hands to stop him from escaping. "Show them how it's done!"

"Siri, I find a dragon!" Leif said merrily, emerging from under a table, dragon carving in hand.

"I saw it first!" said a little boy beside him in a huff, as he emerged after him. Seeing the boy's angry expression, Siri shrugged.

"You snooze you lose!" she said grinning, as Leif quickly dropped the toy in his sister's basket and raced off after the rest of the group, narrowly avoiding a head on collision with another group heading in their direction. As Siri avoided tipping the contents in her basket, the leader of the other group somehow managed to drop all the

contents in theirs, as they ran into a pole to avoid them.

Snorting with laughter, as the older girl fell backwards in a daze, but otherwise, perfectly fine, Siri quickly took advantage of their misfortune and quickly scooped up the scattered contents into her own basket.

"Hey!" the leader said angrily, as she sat up. "That's ours!"

"Not anymore!" Siri exclaimed cheerily, thrusting the basket to Leif. "Run Leif!" she said with a giggle, who wasted no time in using his toddlers energy to escape.

"That's the way to do it, Seer!" Astrid yelled to her, pride evident in her voice. "Good job!"

"Someone's been taking lessons off her mother," Hiccup said in amusement, as he watched his daughter escape from the group, squealing loudly as she ran into more kids.

"Don't you forget it, too," Astrid replied with a smirk, her eyes focused now on her son, who had just found two toy axes in the far side of the hall. "That's my boy!" she yelled to him.

"I was wondering where I hid them!" Gobber exclaimed with a laugh. "Lad got the better of me!"

'Never underestimate the finding powers of a child," Annika noted with a laugh, watching as her own son, 3 year old Eric, crawled out from under a table, toy lamb in hand. Face contorted with confusion as he couldn't find Siri, Annika leaned over the table she was on, screaming at the top of her lungs, "Siri's over there, sweetie!" as she pointed towards the fire pit, "take it to her!" Seeing his look of confusion grow, as he looked around the hall, she sighed loudly and yelled towards Siri instead.

"Siri, Eric has something!" she screamed frantically, as she saw some boys head towards him.

Hearing Annika's voice, Siri quickly raced over to the 3 year old, and grabbed the toy lamb from his hand, and dumped it in her basket as the boys reached her. Scowling in annoyance, they quickly took off, and Siri grabbed Eric's hand and took him with her to the other side of the hall, which hadn't been searched yet.

Annika sighed as she flung down on the seat again, before looking over at Tuffnut, who was watching the action. "He's your son," she said with a grin. "Did you see how confused he looked?"

"He couldn't find Siri, that's why!" Tuffnut protested.

"Is it just me, or are the kids slowing down?" Valka, standing beside Hiccup, asked with a frown as she watched the kids start to amble around in confusion.

"It's not over yet," Snotlout said with a knowing grin. "Hiccup and I hid some good ones over where Siri is now. Only the brightest kids will know where to find them."

Watching his daughter cast her eyes around in thought; Fishlegs



suddenly came up with a thought.

"Only the brightest can find the last items, honey!" he yelled cryptically, causing her to look over towards her father with wide eyes. With narrowed eyes, Astrid gave her friend a perplexed look.

"Do you really think she'll understand that, Legs?" she asked skeptically. "She is only 4."

"You'll see," Fishlegs told her with a small smile, as he watched his daughter's eyes grow wide with realisation, before she ran off towards Siri, who had just found another toy axe.

"Siri!" she said quickly. "My daddy just said only the smartest can find the last toys" she said shyly, as she looked around the area. "They are hiding really good!"

Siri frowned as she cast her eyes over everything around her, but the only things around them were the portraits of the previous Chiefs, and eyes widening with surprise, she quickly jumped up and knocked one to the ground, a little wooden boat falling out from behind the portrait as she did so. Hearing the clank of wood on the floor, a number of eager eyes fell on them from around the hall causing Siri to quickly hide the item in her basket.

"Check all the portraits, Lennie!" she screamed hurriedly, as the other kids raced over, eyes sparkling with excitement. "Get them, guys!" she added to the others, adrenaline pulsing through her veins.

"I got one!" Sigmund yelled, throwing her a toy axe, which narrowly missed the young girl's head.

"Me too!" Kelda said, as she just managed to hit the portrait above her head.

Jumping up, Siri helped Leif move the portrait of their father and grandfather aside, only for the toy to fall straight into another's kids hands.

"Hey!" Siri yelled, only for her yells to fall on death ears, as the little boy ran off in giggles, the toy clutched to his chest.

"I can get it!" Sigmund said eagerly, as he went to chase after the boy, but Siri stopped him with a hand to the shoulder.

"It's in his basket. It's his now," she said.

"So?" the 5 year old said with a shrug. "I can still get it."

"Sigmund Svalgerd Jorgenson, you get back here right now!" Anna yelled furiously upon hearing her son's comment. "You are not playing for the rest of the game, you hear me?!"

"Oh come on, he was just kidding." Snotlout said with a grin, as Sigmund came over to them; but he soon fell quiet at his wife's glare as well. He should have known better than to joke around with this.

"I got one!" Eric said merrily, as he dropped a ball into Siri's basket, before the kids all abruptly jumped upon hearing the horn blow once more.

"Eric has found the last item!" Hiccup said, as he lowered the horn with a grin. "The first round is over, well done!"

Cheers erupted around the hall as the kids all looked into their baskets; their eyes alight with excitement as they tried to work out how many toys they each had in their baskets. Seeing their own basket filled to the brim, Siri quietly hoped that her team had done enough to win, and as she looked around at the other teams, her heart raced at the realisation they may have done just that.

"Astrid and I will now come around and count the number of items you've all collected, before we announce who will go to the second round and who won't," Hiccup said, as he and Astrid stepped down from the platform and started wandering around the groups of kids, excitement still clearly evident in Hiccup's eyes.

"You think we have enough?" Lennart said anxiously, as he peered into the basket.

"If we don't, the other kids must have two baskets." Siri said breathlessly, as she struggled to keep hold of the basket. "This is heavy."

"We get heaps?" Leif asked eagerly, as he took hold of once section of the basket.

"We should have, Leif," Siri confirmed with a grin, as her parents came over to them, and she held out the basket for them to check.

"Woah, this is filled to the top, Seer!" her father exclaimed incredulously, as his arm dropped with the weight of it. Taking the items out one by word, he and Astrid quickly calculated the toys as swiftly as they could, their eyes widening the more they counted. Within a few minutes, Hiccup looked up at his daughter with a proud beam.

"With a total of 30 toys, Siri's group has won the first round!" Hiccup announced proudly, pulling his daughter in for a hug. "Great job, sweetie!"

"Thanks, daddy," she said cheerfully, as she met Lennart's eyes with a grin of her own.

"With the number of toys each group or children has collected, 16 children are now out of the game for tomorrow." Astrid said sympathetically. "But don't worry, each of you will still get to help with tomorrow's game. And those people are..."

Siri had tuned out by this time. Why worry about who was still in when her group had already won? Sweeping her eyes across the hall, the 9 year old suddenly froze as she suddenly caught her name in the air. Eyes narrowed, she listened intently towards the source of the sound.

"...expected her to win." she heard a Viking woman say quietly. "How would it look if the heir of Berk lost a simple present hunt?"

"She's only 9," her companion replied gently. "It's not like everyone expects her to win everything."

"Siri," Lennart whispered beside her. "What are you-"

"Sssh!" she hissed at him, waving her arm in front of him. She gestured to the two women speaking in undertones nearby. "Listen."

Frowning slightly, Lennart listened intently towards the conversation, his eyes widening in surprise as the women continued their discussion, unaware of their young audience.

"...9 or not, she can't show weakness in a simple game now can she? Did you see the way she took those items from that other kid? That was the mark of a good leader that was! It was genius...!"

"It's only a game, Hilda..."

"Best way to show what type of leader she'll be though, isn't it? Especially if she wins the whole thing; first female Chief and all..."

Listening to the two women whisper amongst themselves "or so they thought" Siri could have sworn that every eye in the hall was on her as she cast her gaze around; proud smiling faces turned towards her in every direction she looked. Well, they seemed to be turned to her anyway. Did everybody really expect her to win just because she was the chief's daughter? The thought made the 9 year olds stomach clench.

"Don't listen to them, Seer," Lennart's gentle voice cut through the fog of her thoughts, and giving a start, she quickly turned her head towards him, where she saw a kind smile form on his lips as he looked at her. Sighing loudly, Siri quickly glanced between him and the two Viking women, still talking nearby.

"What if they're right, though?" Siri asked, blue eyes widening with alarm. "What if everyone does expect me to win because I'm the heir?" She looked around the eyes that were upon her and Lennart, before looking back towards her friend. "They're looking at me" she said quietly.

"Because you won," Lennart insisted kindly, placing a hand on her shoulder. "Not because you have too!" He shook his head with a smile. "Nobody expects any of us to win. It's just a game, Seer."

"But they're right," Siri said quickly, cutting off Lennart midway through his comment. "I can't lose a simple game, can I? And if I do, what will people think of me-?"

"Seer-" Lennart began, but was cut off by the frantic shaking of Siri's head.

"No, Len," Siri said as she quickly cast her gaze over towards her parents, carefully explaining the details of the next round. "They're

right." Looking back towards her best friend, Lennart didn't fail to notice the competitive gleam cross her eyes, and knew her mind was made up before she even said it.

"I can't let everyone down," she said, with a quick glance in her parent's direction. "We're going to win tomorrow, no matter how hard it is."

\* \* \*

><p>"When we leaving, mummy?"<p>

"The next round isn't until later, buddy, be patient."

"But I wanna play!"

"Are you alright, Seer?" Hiccup asked his daughter, snapping her out of her reverie as she listened to her mum and brother. "You look a little out of it is all. You okay?"

"Yeah I'm fine," Siri said with a small smile, as she met her father's concerned gaze. "Just thinking of how to win this round!"

"Win?" Hiccup asked with a laugh. "You shouldn't be worried about that, sweetie. If yesterday was anything to go by, you'll breeze through today's round!"

"You think so?" Siri asked uncertainly, looking between her father and energetic brother, who her mother was trying to coax some breakfast into, with little success. "So, you think I should win too?" Her smile faded slightly as she asked this. Noticing this, Hiccup frowned slightly.

"What do you mean I think you should win?" Hiccup asked her gently. "I only meant-"

A knock on the door cut off Hiccup's explanation, which made everyone start and look towards closed door, which was quickly rapped on again before another word could be said.

"It's me, Hiccup," came Fishlegs voice from the other side. "Can I come in?"

"Sure, Fishlegs," Hiccup said quickly, a frown quickly forming on his face as he looked towards Astrid, whose face mirrored his own. As the door opened, Fishlegs quickly popped his head in, and giving a smile to the kids, he quickly looked towards his Chief.

"Hiccup, there seems to be a storm coming in from the north-"

"A storm?" Astrid asked sharply, quickly looking past Fishlegs bulking form, to see billowing white snow clouds, coming in from the distance. Her stomach clenched at the sight of them, and tearing her gaze from the clouds in front of her, she quickly looked at the kids, eating breakfast behind her, to Hiccup and Fishlegs beside her, who were discussing the approaching storm.

"Everyone was wondering if we could get the next round done now?" Fishlegs was saying. "It's just if we leave it too late, the kids

will be playing in the storm, and won't be able to find anything!"

"You don't think we should cancel it?" Astrid asked uneasily, looking from the two men beside her to the storm clouds ahead of her. "I mean, we don't know how big the storm will be."

"It's just a snowstorm, Astrid," Hiccup said, a slight frown forming on his face at his wife's uneasiness. "It won't be here for awhile, and it doesn't look that bad." He looked at Fishlegs with a nod. "Tell everyone the next round starts in 10 minutes. We'll be right there."

"Right, Chief."

"Are you sure this is a good idea?" Astrid asked Hiccup, looking after Fishlegs retreating back. "What if the kids are still playing when it hits?"

"Astrid, it'll be fine," Hiccup reassured her gently, taking her hands in his own, and raising them to his lips in a soft kiss. "The worst thing that will happen is that they can't find the toys in all the snow!" Hiccup added with a chuckle, causing her to laugh despite herself, before Hiccup quickly turned to the kids, eagerly waiting to go behind him.

"Come on," he said to them with a grin. "We better get going before you lose the toys in the snow!"

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><p>"Round 2 of the Snoggletog hunt is here in the village," Hiccup said, gesturing to the buildings around him. "But that doesn't mean you have to look everywhere. The only places you have to look are the plaza-" he nodded to the area around him, before pointing to the stables nearby, "-the stables, around houses, and it wouldn't hurt to check some benches and dragons in the area, either.-" Looking around the area as if he was being spied on, Hiccup quickly lowered his voice, with a teasing grin forming on his lips. "I suspect some of the dragons<em> may<em> have stolen some of the items since we hid them last night," he said in undertone to the kids with a sly wink, making the kids laugh.

"Who's the real kid in this?" Anna whispered to Astrid, who had to bite her lip to hide her smile.

"Okay, get ready..." Hiccup said, his own tone full of excitement, as the remaining 29 kids, stood ready, "and...go!" He blew the horn, and within moments the kids had shot off in every direction they could go, with the dragons running in opposite directions to avoid getting caught.

"Don't follow the dragons!" Siri called out to her group, as Sigmund and Eric went chasing after Stormfly, who looked back at them with a cunning expression, having easily eluded them. "They won't let you get to them until you've found everything else!"

"How do you know?" Sigmund asked rudely, earning him a hit off his brother.

"The dragons have the winner's toys," Kelda broke in shyly. "They'll only let us have them when we find the other ones."

Without wasting time, unlike so many of the other children who were being worn out chasing after dragons, Siri immediately raced over to a nearby bench and fell to her knees, groping around under the seat.

"Found one!" she yelled cheerfully, emerging triumphant with a wooden dragon toy, before racing off to another one.

"Siri, I find one!" Leif exclaimed giddily, racing towards her with a toy axe, dropping it in her basket and racing off again.

"Leif, you have to stay with me!" she yelled after him, before shooting off after her hyper little brother, finding a toy yak on the ground on the way.

"Siri, wait up!" she heard Lennart shout from behind her, and wheeling around, she saw an older boy chasing after him, arm outstretched for the toy in the 8 year olds hand. Quickly checking to see if Leif was alright, Siri ran back in her friend's direction and innocently stuck her foot out, tripping the boy, and allowing Lennart to throw the toy in the basket.

"That's my girl!" Hiccup yelled proudly, throwing his hands up in the air, earning him a bemused look from not only Astrid, but the rest of his friends as well. He cleared his throat, as the blood rushed to his cheeks.

"Would you like to join them, babe?" Astrid asked him humorously, causing Hiccup to grin at her.

"Love to, milady, but I'm not in the age range," he said grinning, before he watched Kelda quickly take a toy from a terrible terror who had gotten confused in all the commotion.

"That's a girl, Kelda!" Hiccup yelled out to her, before he looked around to Fishlegs and Ruffnut, who were cheering for their little girl. "She's a bright one, isn't she?" Hiccup said in amazement. "And at her age!"

"Takes after him," Ruffnut said with a chuckle, nodding her head towards her husband. "We all know it's not from me," which caused everyone to snort with laughter. Turning their attention back to the game, though, everyone watched in awe as 3 year old Eric jumped in front of an older girl and pointed behind her.

"Terror behind you!" he screamed innocently, causing the girl to startle and drop the toy she had just retrieved from a water trough. Picking it up with a high pitch laugh, the little boy scrambled away as quick as his legs could carry him towards Siri and Lennart, just as the girl realised she'd been tricked, and was turning crimson in fury.

"Why you little-!"

Tuffnut and Annika roared with laughter as they watched their son run away from the furious girl, giggling at the top of his lungs.

"Go Eric!" Tuffnut yelled after his son, a wide grin spreading across his face. "That's the way to do it!"

"I can't believe it," Hiccup said, staring after the toddler, thunderstruck. "It's like watching a little Tuffnut running around!" He looked around to the others, eyes wide in astonishment. "What \_have \_we done to these kids? That's competitiveness to the extreme!"

"I just hope they finish soon," Astrid said uneasily, as she looked up at the thickening clouds above her. "I don't like the look of these clouds."

"It's just a bit of snow," Hiccup replied with a grin, oblivious to the worry evident in Astrid's tone. "Besides," he added with an amused look to his wife, "-if anything, it will make them search harder before the snow buries everything!"

Astrid looked at him in disbelief, as she heard the faint roar of thunder in the distance, causing her heart to skip a beat; sweat beads popping on her forehead. "But, Hiccup-" she began to protest, before a loud scream met their ears, making them wheel around to see Siri and an older girl fighting over a toy.

"Hey, that's mine, I saw it first!" Siri was screaming angrily, completely ignoring Lennart's warnings as he tried to pull her away from the girl, as she took a swipe at the toy, held firmly in an older girl's hand.

"Well, we got here first!" the girl yelled back, yanking the younger girl's hand away. "We got it fair and square! Let go!"

"What's going on?" Hiccup said in bewilderment, as he watched Siri suddenly snatch the toy from the older girl's hand, effectively knocking her to the ground in the process, causing a fight to suddenly break out between groups.

"What the-?" Astrid started, all thoughts of the storm erased from her mind, as Hiccup's face reddened with in anger.

"Siri Astrid Haddock!" he yelled furiously, causing his daughter to suddenly start, and look over towards him, eyes wide with shock at the tone in his voice. Looking from him to Lennart, staring wide eyed behind her, she hovered uncertainly, unsure on what to do.

"Give the basket to Lennart, and come over here right now, young lady!" Hiccup said, looking at her sharply, causing her to quickly hand the basket over to Lennart, before slowly walking over to her father, head hung low. As she reached her parents, they quickly pulled her aside, despite the fact that every Viking's face was turned to them in shock, and not the game still going on behind them.

"Would you care to explain what that was all about, young lady?!" Astrid cut in quickly, before Hiccup could open his mouth. "That was completely uncalled for!"

"Not uncalled for," Hiccup said angrily, "it was completely unnecessary!"

"But she stole the toys from us earlier!" Siri protested, pointing her finger towards the other girl, who was looking in her direction with a smug look, making Siri's stomach boil with anger.

"And that makes it alright, does it Siri?" Astrid asked her sharply, before Hiccup could speak. "I love competition as much as the next Viking, but what you did was completely uncalled for, no matter how much you want to win." She sighed. "It's just lucky for you this wasn't actually against the rules"

"So?" Siri said slowly, with a hopeful look towards her parents and grandmother. "I'm not disqualified?"

"No," Hiccup said, causing her to sigh in relief. "But-" Hiccup continued, causing her smile to fade, "-if we don't like the answer you give us for what happened later on, you will be. Understand?"

Siri opened her mouth to protest, but quickly shut it seeing her parent's looks of anger. She nodded mutely.

"You better get back out there," Astrid said, with an edgy look to the snow, which was beginning to fall. "The dragons have just been given the signal to allow you all to collect the last items."

Siri nodded, and as she raced back to join her group, Hiccup looked towards his wife and mother, a look of disbelief crossing his face.

"What in Thor was that all about?" he asked them in disbelief. "I know Siri's competitive, but that was something else!"

"I think there's something more to this, son," Valka said gently, as she watched Siri sneak a present out of Toothless's saddle bag, to the delight of Kelda and Leif, who were 'distracting' him. "She's been fiercely competitive all day, and not in the way she was yesterday."

Hiccup frowned thoughtfully, recalling his earlier cut off conversation with his daughter. "I wonder if it has anything to do with earlier," he said slowly, causing Valka and Astrid to look at him sharply.

"What conversation?" Valka began, before the horn suddenly sounded, indicating the end of the round; which was lucky considering the darkness of the clouds above.

"Thank Thor for that," Astrid said to Valka nervously, as Hiccup rushed off to count the toys the children had collected, and just quickly, announcing another team as the winner, much to the displeasure of Siri, who stood there in a huff, despite being safe for the last round. "This doesn't look good."

Valka frowned at Astrid's nervous expression. "Astrid," she said gently, holding out a hand to her daughter-in-law, "it's only a small snowstorm. Are you alright?"

"I-"

"We better get going," Hiccup said quickly, shivering slightly as



snow went down his vest as he approached them. "Besides," he said, with a quick look at Siri, "\_we\_ have something to discuss."

\* \* \*

><p>Astonishment. That was what Hiccup and Astrid felt as they listened to their daughter's explanation. As she explained, Siri twisted her hands in her lap nervously, not wanting to meet her eyes with her parents as she told them of what she had overheard the day before, out of fear <em>they</em> would be disappointed as well. Would they be disappointed? She thought, or would they think she was being silly?

"You're not mad at me—are you?" Siri asked softly, as she finally lifted her eyes to meet her parents'. "I know what I did was wrong, I just—really wanted to win."

Hiccup looked at Astrid, who glanced back at her husband with a look of disbelief. Who in the name of Thor would expect a little girl to win a game, regardless of who she was? It was just a game. One that Siri had been enjoying, until she'd heard this.

"No," her father said softly, taking Siri's hand in his. "No, we're not mad at you, sweetie."

"I'd just like to know who said this," Astrid said irritably, as she sat down beside her daughter with a shake of her head.

Siri frowned. "I think her friend said her name was...Hilda...I think." She looked at her parents, uncertainty crossing her eyes, before she shrugged. "I'm not sure."

Hiccup's eyes widened in recognition, before he quickly glanced in Astrid's direction, who met his gaze, with the roll of her eyes.

"Hilda Gunnerson; why am I not surprised?" Hiccup said with a groan.

"Why?" Siri asked, bewildered, looking back and forth between her parents.

"Because Hilda is very." Astrid paused thoughtfully. "Opinionated" she added, for lack of a better word. She glanced in Hiccup's direction, as a grin formed on her face. "She used to say the same thing about your father at times, too. She doesn't know when to keep her mouth shut."

"That's saying something," Hiccup said in annoyance, as Siri began to giggle. "Trust me, Seer, if everyone thought the same way as her, I definitely wouldn't be chief right now that's for sure!"

"But..." Siri said slowly, looking up at her parents gazes. "Everyone was looking at me when I won. They expected me to win."

"They were proud that you won," Astrid corrected her, with a wide smile as she wrapped her arms around her daughter's shoulders.

"That's the only reason they were looking at you, sweetie."

"But—" Siri began to protest, before her father quickly cut her

off.

"But nothing, Seer," Hiccup said, reaching up to tuck a piece of her behind the girl's ear. "None of us expects you to win everything just because you're the heir, and especially not us." He looked over at Astrid, who smiled at them softly. "You don't need to win to make us proud, and you know that. You already have a strong competitive side. I don't think we need to make it worse."

"I want to make everyone proud though," Siri said, her voice low.

"And you do, baby," Hiccup insisted, as he pulled his daughter closer, before dropping a kiss into her hair. "But you have plenty of time to prove yourself as the heir. You're 9 years old, Siri. Plenty of time to start being the Viking warrior I know you are; and if you're anything like your mother..." Hiccup looked towards Astrid with a teasing grin, earning him a punch in response. "Ow." Rubbing his arm, Hiccup looked back at Siri, giggling at the scene. "Now, I know what you did today was because you wanted to win-" he continued, causing Siri's face to fall. "But that doesn't excuse what you did-"

"Even if she did deserve it," Astrid mumbled in annoyance, as she looked at Hiccup's amused look. "What?" she asked him. "Did you see the look she gave Siri when she got in trouble? It was like a female version of Snotlout!" She shuddered, making Siri giggle.

"It's for that reason I'm letting Siri off," Hiccup said, making Siri grin. "But," he said quickly, "if I see you do that again, winning or losing, you will be disqualified. I mean, it's only a game."

"A fun one, though," Siri said with a smile. "I promise I won't do it again, daddy. I'll win the fair way tomorrow. Well" she reconsidered with a mischievous grin, "sort of the fair way."

Hiccup raised his eyebrows in amusement. "She's your daughter," Hiccup said to Astrid, who was heaving with laughter. He quickly looked out the window at that point, as a thought crossed his mind. "Speaking of the game," he said quickly, as he got out of his chair. "I need to go out and see they have everything sorted for tomorrow. You know," he grinned, as he saw the snow flurries drift past the window, "if everything isn't buried under this already that is."

Astrid's smile faded from her face as she watched Hiccup grab a heavy coat from the wooden couch, and headed towards the door, her gaze focussed on the thickly falling snow outside. As she did, the sound of thunder reached her ears, echoing in her head like an explosion. Her heart sped up as she watched Hiccup reach out for the door.

"Shouldn't you wait until morning?" Astrid said quickly, finally finding her voice, despite the panic she felt. "It's getting pretty bad out there."

"It's just a bit of thundersnow, Astrid," Hiccup said with a laugh. Going to step outside, though, a flash of lightning lit up the dark afternoon sky, lighting everything in the young man's path, freezing him in his tracks. "Woah," he said, a little surprised, "make that a

lightning snowstorm." He turned around to look at Siri, who was looking at the storm with slightly fearful eyes. "We might be cancelling tomorrow anyway, huh, Seer?"

"Don't show me, daddy," Siri shuddered slightly, as she turned her eyes away from the door. "I hate storms." She looked over at her mother, who was standing near the door, her eyes locked on the storm outside. She frowned. "Mum, are you okay?"

Astrid didn't hear her daughter as a wave of panic washed over her as she watched Hiccup hover by the door, where large snowflakes were coming down thick and fast. As beads of sweat formed on her forehead, she was soon overcome by dizziness, which made her reach for the table behind her, as a flash of lightning burned onto her retina.

"Astrid?" Hiccup's worried voice broke through the fog of her thoughts, and as she started, she saw him looking at her, concern filling his eyes, over by the doorway. Panic filled her once more.

"You're not going out there!" she exclaimed fearfully, her voice shaking.

"Astrid, what's wrong?" Hiccup asked anxiously, moving forward to take Astrid's hands in his. "It's just a bit of a storm and I'm only going to the Great Hall-"

"I don't want you out there!"

"Astrid-"

"I've already lost you once!" Astrid burst out, her voice fearful. Eyes widening with her admission, she lowered her eyes as her face reddened with humiliation. "I've already lost you once," she repeated quietly, "and...I don't want it happening again. Please," she pleaded, squeezing his hands in her own, "-just...stay inside. You can check the preparations in the morning." She looked over her shoulder at the snow. "If this lets up of course."

Hiccup was speechless for a moment, before he silently led Astrid away from the door, kicking it shut in the process as he took her in his arms, where Astrid quickly buried her face into his vest, wrapping her arms around him tightly.

"Why didn't you tell me you were scared?" he asked her gently, raising a hand to stroke her blonde hair, which was falling out of its usually tight braid, before he took her chin, lifting her shining azure eyes up to meet with his own. "You've been acting weird all day; you should have told me what it was."

"Because it's been three months," Astrid said softly, with a sigh. "I shouldn't be feeling this way anymore. I didn't want you thinking I was...weak."

"You're not weak, Astrid," Hiccup said gently, as he caressed her cheek tenderly. "You're just a little shaken up still. It's only natural." He sighed. "I should have known you were scared today, but I kept laughing it off. I'm sorry."

Astrid smiled, as she reached to take the hand that was on her cheek. "It's alright." she said. "I don't think I fully knew what it was either. I just wish I didn't feel this way, though."

"It's just going to take time," Hiccup reassured her. "Siri still doesn't like storms, either. It's not your fault." Taking her head gently in his hands, he leant forward and kissed her forehead softly, making her blush. "It will get better, sweetheart, I promise." He looked towards the window, where lightning once again lit up the sky. "I think I will wait until morning," he said with a grimace. "Even I'm not in the mood to be a human lightning rod right now; what about you bud?" Toothless looked up at him from his spot by the fire, and giving a small coo, went back to his nap.

"It will get better, mummy," Siri interjected with a smile, as she held her mother's hand. "I hate storms, but I'm not really afraid of them anymore. It just takes some time."

"Thanks, baby," Astrid replied gratefully, as she reached down to stroke her daughter's hair, before she suddenly found herself grinning. "If this is gone by tomorrow, though, you'll be hating it alright. You won't find anything under all this snow!"

"Yay," Siri replied sarcastically.

"Yeah, yay," Leif echoed, although he wasn't really paying attention from where he was playing, making Siri roll her eyes.

"I can't wait until I get my new baby sister," Siri emphasised loudly in her brother's direction. "At least she'll pay attention."

That got Leif's attention. Looking up at his sister, he crossed his arms with a frown.

"Not a sister, it a brother!" he argued back, looking up at his parents. "Wight, mummy?"

"It doesn't matter, sweetie," Astrid said with a small smile, as she touched her slightly swollen belly. "Either way I'll be happy."

"Same here," Hiccup said, touching his wife's belly proudly, before a wide grin spread across his face. "I say it's a girl...oof!" Hiccup got the wind knocked out of him, when Astrid punched in the stomach, making him chuckle slightly.

"Don't you start, you're as bad as them!" she exclaimed, nodding towards the bickering siblings behind them. "I say boy." she added causally, making Hiccup snort.

"So much for not getting into it."

"Girl!"

"Boy!"

Hiccup groaned at the commotion behind him. "Is everything a competition now?" he sighed.

\* \* \*

><p>"Behind you...no, not there, <em>behind<em> you, Leif...yes, there you go!"

"That's a little close to cheating there, isn't it, babe?" Astrid asked Hiccup, watching as their son finally found the little toy, hidden half in the snow, and took off in the direction Siri went.

Hiccup shrugged. "It's not cheating if I'm not playing," he insisted.

"You tell yourself that, dear," Valka said with a laugh, causing him to snort and go back to watching the round, which had been going on for awhile, due to the thick snow upon the ground, achieved by the previous night's storm.

"Hey, Siri!"

Siri wheeled around, only to come face to face with the older girl, whose name she discovered, was, Solvi.

"What?" she asked in annoyance, as she tried to get around her. Solvi stepped in front of her, though; smug grin turning into a smirk, as she looked over towards Hiccup and Astrid talking nearby.

"Did you get in trouble yesterday, Siri?" she asked arrogantly.

Siri scowled. "Thanks to you, yes," she answered. "But daddy let me off."

"Typical," Solvi scoffed, blowing a piece of her black hair away from her face. "Of course the Chief's daughter didn't get disqualified. What did you do; lie?"

"Didn't need to," Siri said calmly, as a grin began to form on her face, bewildering Solvi. She looked behind the older girl. "NOW, LEIF!" she screamed, causing Solvi's eyes to widen as she wheeled around, tripping over a tree root in the process, sending a few toys from her basket flying onto the ground, which were quickly picked up by Leif and Kelda, standing behind her.

"Not sorry!" Siri called back as she raced away, basket firmly in hand, with Solvi's angry yells following behind her.

"Good girl, Siri, that's my girl!" Valka yelled at her, causing Hiccup and Astrid to look at her in surprise. She blushed. "What?" she said, "she deserved it" making every single Viking in the immediate vicinity howl with laughter.

"Oh, she's her mother's daughter, alright," Gobber chuckled, wiping tears of mirth from his eyes. "She's you in every way, lass," he said to Astrid, who grinned proudly.

"I just hope this wraps up soon," Anna said with a wince, as she watched Solvi trip another girl for 2 toys she'd just collected. "This is getting too competitive."

"Yeah, this isn't what I had in mind, that's for sure," Hiccup agreed as he watched Lennart slam a toy axe into the basket, to avoid to

being taken. "It's like a Snoggletog version of Thawfest."

"Siri!" Kelda yelled to the older girl, as she pointed to a Terrible Terror nearby. "There's a bracelet on the terror!" She looked again. "It's Midnight!"

"What!" Siri said with a laugh, as she rushed over to see her terror, looking at her innocently. "I was wondering where you got to, Midnight!" Reaching down, she quickly grabbed the bracelet, patted the terror's head, and ran off in another direction, only for a quick blast of the horn to sound. Everyone stopped; Siri staring daggers in Solvi's direction as she tried to sneak by.

"There is only one toy left hidden in the forest!" Gobber said. "Once it's found, the game will be over!"

Siri looked over towards Solvi's group, who quickly looked at one another, before suddenly taking off in the direction of a wild group of Terrible Terrors. Seeing what they were doing, Siri and Lennart chased after them.

"Oh, no, you don't!" Siri yelled after her, leaving the rest of the group struggling to catch up to them; including Leif, who could usually beat his sister's energy any day.

"Try to keep up, \_Siri.\_" Solvi mocked, turning her head towards the young girl mid jog, resulting in a loud \_crash \_as she ran into a tree ahead, flinging her backwards upon the snow covered ground.

Siri came to an abrupt halt, causing Lennart to barely be able to stop in time behind her, staring down at the 11 year old girl, who herself looking up at Siri with a blank expression across her face. Her lip quivered. Before Siri knew it, Solvi was howling with laughter, and before long she joined in, her shoulders shaking with hilarity, as she reached out a hand for the girl.

"Are you alright?" Siri asked her, unable to contain her laughter.

"Yeah," she replied, as she heaved herself up. Casting her gaze around the trees surrounding them, she looked back at Siri, a grin plastered on her face. "I guess competitiveness \_does \_hurt," she said, wincing slightly as she felt her nose, which was stinging in pain. "Literally."

Laughing, Siri and Solvi both turned to leave, when the sound of the horn alarmed both of them. Startled, the two girls looked at each other, identical looks of horror etched onto their faces as they turned to see the group of 4 children, aged between 7 and 10, standing open mouth and in awe at the notion that \_they\_ had won the game.

"Butâ€¦" Siri stuttered, staring after the young group, "â€¦how did \_they\_ win? We were beating them!"

"Never underestimate the underdog, Seer," she heard her mother say from behind her. Turning around, Siri saw her parents coming up to her, proud grins on their faces, despite her loss. Astrid turned to her husband as she said this, with a small smile, which he returned.

"I learnt that with your father, sweetie."

"Is that a compliment, milady?" he asked her with a laugh, before he bent down to count the toys in Siri's basket. Looking up at her, he smiled. "Seems to me if you and Solvi here weren't fighting, you would have won." He tilted the basket at an angle to show her the contents, almost spilling out, as he did this. "You lost by that one toy."

Groans emitted all round at this news, and Siri looked at her father, eyes widening with astonishment, as she glanced from him, to the other group, and back again, bewilderment clear in her eyes.

"How did they win, though?" Siri asked her father, who's eyes widened in amusement at the question. "I didn't think they had collected that much."

"You would have known they'd been beating you all day if you had just payed attention," her father answered with a grin.

"Don't worry, daddy, I'll win next year," Siri said, eyes shining with determination, causing Solvi to huff as she looked in her direction.

"In your dreams, Siri!"

"Oh really? Well, who came second-?!"

"Well-"

Astrid looked in Hiccup's direction, eyes widening with disbelief as the two girls bickered in front of them, causing the rest of the kids to quietly sneak away. Hiccup heaved an exasperated sigh, as he returned the look, frustration clearly written on his features. Astrid gave him a sympathetic smile.

'Never again?" she asked.

"Never again."

\* \* \*

><p><em>There you go, the short lived Snoggletog hunt, lol! I really hope you all liked it, despite some bits not being as good as others, but I was still quite happy with it, despite that, especially being able to write the other kids in. I also hope I wrote Astrid's panic attack well, considering I myself get them myself from time to time, and it's quite hard to explain how people feel with one : It won't be something that will happen often, I just needed to show that despite the fact she's herself again, she's still a little effected.

—

Anyway, the next chapter will be about Astrid having the new baby. Now, because I've already done chapters involving Siri and Leif's birth, I have to do something different, so I'm going to warn you all that this won't be a smooth sailing labour and there WILL be some complications, but\_\_please don't let that scare you off!\_\_I promise it will be all worth it by the end! For the reviewers giving me suggestions on the baby's game and gender, I'm so sorry, but I forgot to mention earlier that this baby has been in the works since the

beginning of the story, as well as a lot of other storylines, so the gender, name, personality and looks have been thoughtfully planned out, but thank you for the suggestions anyway! I really did like one name given.\_

\_\*\*Ok, PLEASE, PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO REVIEW! After 2 weeks of writing, I'd like to know what you think! Please, remember though, I do not tolerate flames in any form, but kind constructive criticism is accepted. \*\*\_The next \_\_chapter should be up in a few weeks hopefully, hopefully before my birthday, which is on the 19\_\_th\_\_ of Feb! :D can't guarantee this though because now that school is back in from the summer holidays, I could be called in at any time. Perils of being a casual teacher, so I may have less time to write.

\_

\_Thanks for reading! :D\_

### 33. Chapter 33: Difficult Delivery

\_At last, the chapter you've all been waiting for, the birth of Hiccup and Astrid's third baby :) Considering though that I've already written 2 birth chapters already, I had to do something to change this one and I will tell you that there are some complications. For those of you who are a bit unsure of reading this sort of stuff, I assure you it will be worth the read, although there may be some bits are a little descriptive, but not too much. \_

\_I can assure you that everything that happens to Astrid in this chapter is entirely realistic, as I am a huge fan of the TV series Call the Midwife, and I watched and read the series again in order to get everything right, as well as a bit of extra research, so I didn't just make this stuff up! It's definitely realistic for the time period anyway, minus some of the language, but I did that to make it easier to write.\_

\_Anyway, on with the chapter! \_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 33 â€" Difficult Delivery<span>

\* \* \*

><p>Moonlight poured into the Haddock household, casting a silvery glow of light upon the rocking chair in which Astrid was now sitting. Sitting contentedly in her rocking chair, Astrid was attentively focussed on the pair of woollen booties she was knitting, slowly rocking back and forth in a gentle rhythm, which was carefully timed with each stitch she set. Even the terrible terrors, which were usually rowdy during the evening, were quiet as the cool spring night had closed in. This led to a quiet stillness in the village that was an uncommon occurrence: Berk was quiet, almost completely, save the gentle thrum of the waves below. This calmness was reflected in the cosy bedroom of the Haddocks; Siri and Leif had gone to bed without fuss and were deep in sleep already. The only noise in the room was the creak of Astrid rocking in her rocking chair, the only thoughts in her head being to concentrate on her knitting and the occasional stirring of her unborn child in her belly.<p>



"Are you coming to bed, or are you planning on sitting up all night?"

Startled, Astrid whipped her head up from her task, heart rapidly beating in her chest as she saw the amused expression of her husband, sitting up against the pillows of the bed, his eyes watching her closely as she placed the knitting to one side; heart thumping in her ears.

"What are you trying to do? Scare me half to death?" Astrid asked him, looking over him with narrowed eyes.

"You were so deep in your own little world, I didn't think that would work," Hiccup said with a chuckle, watching Astrid's hand stay covered over her rapidly beating heart. He smiled at her tenderly. "What were you thinking of?" he asked softly; watching as she brought her hand away from her chest, to gently touched the booties she placed beside her with a warm smile upon her face.

"I never thought I'd be knitting for a baby again," Astrid replied, directing a smile in Hiccup's direction. "I thought we were done with it!" she added with a chuckle.

"So did Snotlout and Anna," Hiccup grinned. "It happens."

Astrid snorted, before a mischievous grin formed on her face. "Yeah, it's not like there's any way to stop it, unless we--"

Hiccup's face reddened slightly. "Astrid!" he exclaimed, before the parents suddenly jumped by the creak of their bedroom door. Whipping their heads around, they saw Leif's auburn mop of hair peer into the open doorway, his eyes landing on his parents with a look of innocence which fooled neither of them.

"Mummy, I'm thirsty," he said an air of innocence to his tone that was almost believable. "Can I haff a drink?"

"You know full well you have a mug of water in your room, buddy," Hiccup said with a chuckle as he stood up from the bed, before padding over to the 3 year old. He knelt down in front of him, eyes wide with scepticism. "Are you trying to get out of sleeping young man?" he asked his son, tone full of amusement.

"No," Leif said quickly, but his eyes gave him away, causing Astrid to shake her head.

"You'll have to do better than that, Leif," she said with a laugh, seeing her son's sheepish expression. "Go on, back to bed, sweetie," she added with a gentle smile, as she gently eased herself off the chair with a slight groan.

"Come on, buddy," Hiccup said gently, watching as his son yawned widely, his bright emerald eyes impeded by sleep. "Let's get you back to bed, huh?" he added with a chuckle, holding out his hand for the toddler. "You can cheat sleep tomorrow."

"I don't wanna," the little boy whined, but his voice, thick with sleep, betrayed him.

"Ah huh," Hiccup said smiling, "and that yawn was just for

show- "

Astrid shook her head with a smile as the door closed behind her husband and son. Typical Leif, always trying to get out of sleeping, even if he had already \_been \_asleep, she thought. Hands folding over her 8 month pregnant belly, Astrid rubbed the bulge lovingly, feeling the gentle nudges of her baby inside her; she wondered whether this baby will be like this too, before gently easing herself into bed, a great yawn escaping her in the course of it. She looked over at the booties sitting on the bedside table. She'll finish those later, she thought, as her eyes grew heavy.

Exhaustion creeping over her a fog, Astrid willingly closed her eyes, just as Hiccup joined her; the creak of the bed the only indication of his presence. Snuggling close to her, Astrid smiled as she felt the feather light brush of Hiccup's lips upon her cheek, and the gentle touch of his hand on her swollen belly, the baby responding in favour with a strong kick to Hiccup's hand, before the brightness upon Astrid's eyelids went dark as the candle was snuffed out.

\* \* \*

><p>Astrid was restless. As soon as the young woman had closed her eyes in slumber for the night, her exhausted mind began to play tricks with her. Incoherent shapes and colours rolled across Astrid's slumbering mind like a thunderstorm, jagged colours of all tones, mixed with disjointed images dancing across her mind like a scattered scene in front of her. Faces popped in and out of her befuddled mind, confusion addling the Viking warrior's brain as her dreams became to grow more and more disjointed, disorganised shapes and colours infused into her dreams like an inscription on a sword, her body screaming in pain as she tried to fight them off. Suddenly, a sharp pain struck her, startling her into consciousness; heart thundering in her ears, and her breathing laboured as her sleep addled mind caught up to her conscious state.<p>

Pain was ripping through Astrid's body so severe that Astrid's breath caught in her throat, making her grit her teeth as it pulsed through her body like a lightning strike to the stomach. Wincing slightly, she shut her eyes against the pain, breathing heavily in an attempt to ignore the agony, with no success. As the pain eased, her mind became clear. Her heart skipped a beat, as her eyes widened in fear at the realisation of what that pain \_actually\_ was. \_Oh no,\_ she thought, \_no, no, no. Not now!\_

"Astrid?" she heard Hiccup's voice ask beside her, his tone tinged with worry. "Are you alright?"

"Hiccup," she breathed fearfully as she turned her head towards him, "I think..."

Hiccup's eyes widened in equal fear as another pain shot through Astrid's belly, making her gasp in pain. His mind raced as he thought about the possibility that '...\_no\_...\_she can't be, it's too soon!' \_Before Hiccup could say or think anything more though, Astrid suddenly gave a squeak of alarm, before rapidly ripping the covers off her body; her eyes staring down at the blankets underneath her, her eyes widening in terror.

Her waters had broken.

\* \* \*

><p>"How long has she been like this?" Petrine asked sharply as she entered the room, Hiccup Valka and Ansfrida hot on her heels, their faces holding identical looks of anxiety on the faces.<p>

"She woke up in pain about 20 minutes ago," Hiccup replied feebly, his eyes fixed on his wife on the bed. "I didn't want to believe it, but her waters broke..." he trailed off, his voice beginning to shake.

"I can't be in labour!" Astrid protested weakly as Petrine readied her equipment beside the bed. "It's too soon! I can't have this baby tonight!"

"You are and you can, dear," Petrine replied gently, sitting down beside the frightened young woman. "It will be alright."

"But it's too early!" Astrid exclaimed, her breathing laboured as fear took hold of her body. "I'm not due for another month!" A few tears slipped out of her eyes as the reality of the situation suddenly dawned on her. "Petrine, I'm scared" she admitted, as she squeezed the midwife's hand.

"Nonsense," the midwife said sternly, fixing the young woman a firm look. "I've delivered babies earlier than this, and they've come through just fine!" She turned to Valka, who was looking towards her daughter-in-law upon the bed nervously. "Val," Petrine said, getting the dragon woman's attention, "Hiccup was born earlier than this wasn't he?"

Valka nodded as a reassuring smile lit up her pale face as she sat beside Astrid upon the bed. "Petrine's right, dear," Valka told her reassuringly. "Hiccup was born almost 6 weeks early, and yet look at him now!" She waved a hand towards her son, hovering anxiously beside the bed, his face paler than either woman had ever seen. Hearing this, though, a small smile twitched at the corner of his mouth, before he responded.

"Yeah, I'm a twig, but I'm all Viking," he said with a slight grin.

Emitting a small laugh, Astrid's face suddenly contorted with pain as another contraction suddenly ripped through her, even stronger than the last. Whipping her hand towards Hiccup, she suddenly latched onto his hand and held it firmly causing him to let out a squeak of pain, but he didn't try to remove his hand from her grip. After a few moments, the pain ceased and Astrid turned her sweat covered face towards Hiccup, a small smile upon her lips.

"Stay with me?" she asked anxiously.

"I'm not going anywhere, Astrid," Hiccup said, as he bent down to kiss her sweaty brow lovingly, before he wrapped a comforting arm around her shoulders.

"Do you want me to leave?" Valka asked Petrine, who was bending down to check the situation with Astrid. Hearing the question, she looked up and shook her head.

"No, you can stay if you want, Val," she said with a smile. "Astrid's going to need all the support she can get." She looked over at Astrid quickly. "If she's alright with it, that is."

"Of course she can stay," Astrid said, turning her head to her mother-in-law with a wide smile. "We'll make it a party, shall we?"

Laughter emitted from all around at the young woman's relaxed quip, which eased tensions all around the room. Hiccup's heart steadied to a gentle rhythm as Astrid began to relax and Petrine looked up from her position with a slight smile.

"Nothing's happening yet," she announced, as she pulled herself up from the floor with a slight groan. "It seems to me this baby has decided to take it's time after all."

"That's a good thing?" Astrid hissed, as yet another pain shot through her abdomen.

"It is, sweetheart," Ansfrida assured her gently, as she stroked her daughter's hair back off her face and tying it back up in its regular braid. "A rapid birth is more painful and more risky. It's better this way."

"Whatever you say, mum," Astrid groaned, as she laid her head back against the pillows and closing her eyes. Her brow furrowed in thought slightly as she did so, before her eyes suddenly snapped open again, casting her eyes over to the door.

"Where's Siri and Leif?" she asked quickly, looking back at her mother and husband. "Are they still asleep?"

Hiccup shook his head. "No," he said gently, "mum took them over to Ruffnut and Fishlegs' a little while ago. They're okay," he added swiftly, seeing the questioning look on Astrid's face, "they're worried, but they were too tired to ask questions. Toothless is with them."

Astrid nodded, relief evident within her eyes. "Good," she said, "I don't want them to hear this-" Astrid hissed as another pain cut off her comment, leaving her unable to speak for a moment. Hiccup and Ansfrida took hold of her hands tightly, whispering soothing words until the pain passed. Once it did, Astrid lay back on the pillows, exhaustion showing in her eyes.

"I wish I'd gotten more sleep," she said tiredly, as she rested her hands on her rounded belly. "If this keeps up, I'll be too tired to push."

"Try to sleep between pains, dear," Petrine advised her, as she ducked under a blanket to check progress once again. "Most mothers can sleep through the earliest ones, anyway." Emerging from the blanket, she smiled at Astrid. "I think you're a little bit on the way, Astrid. See? It's not as bad as you thought," she added with a grin, which Astrid groggily returned.

"How long?" she asked the midwife, as she leant her head on Hiccup's to grab some extra sleep.

" By lunchtime, maybe?" the midwife suggested with a gentle smile.  
"Just relax, dear, its going as well as expected."

\* \* \*

><p>Astrid hazily watched as sunlight crept across the wooden floorboards, just slightly touching the wall behind her, illuminating the bed covers in a golden hue. She had been watching the sunlight advance across the room in a haze of pain and sweat, using the advancing light as a timepiece as the night had developed into morning, and the morning ticked towards afternoon and still the light was creeping closer. The pains in her stomach continuing in wave after wave, as exhaustion began to slowly claim her after each sharp pain she went through, with no progress in sight, despite the great many hours she had endured its agony.<p>

"Why is it taking so long?" Astrid faintly heard Hiccup's panicked voice ask Petrine. "You said it would be over by now! What's wrong?"

"The birth has stalled," the midwife answered impassively, hands quickly checking Astrid's progress again. "It seems the baby might be stuck."

"Stuck?" Astrid said fearfully, her mind breaking through the fog of exhaustion as she looked towards the composed midwife. "What does that mean? What's happening?" she asked frantically, looking over towards Hiccup, Valka and Ansfrida, whose faces were all drained of colour as they glanced towards the midwife.

"Don't panic, dear," Petrine told her gently, coming around to the other side of the bed quickly. "Panicking is only going to make it worse. It may be nothing but a stalled birth-"

"But it may not either...right?" Hiccup asked her nervously, his heart thumping loudly in his ears as panic began to settle in his stomach.

"I'm going to check Astrid's tummy, and see if we can figure out what's going on," Petrine told him gently, as she gently placed her hands upon Astrid's swollen stomach, and carefully began to probe around. Breathing heavily, Astrid held onto Hiccup's hand tightly, as she tried to keep the panic she felt at bay as she watched Petrine's gentle hands move across her large belly with careful movements, probing here and there. After awhile, her eyes narrowed.

"What is it?" Ansfrida asked apprehensively, watching the midwife's eyes widen in surprise. Hearing the older woman speak, she looked towards them all.

"The baby is doing fine," she told them, to the sighs of relief of everyone, "but there is a slight problem" she added hesitantly, as she looked towards the panicked parents. "The baby is the wrong way around."

"What does that mean?" Hiccup asked her, his eyes wide.

"It means it's coming out bottom first," Petrine explained calmly. "That's why the birth has stalled, because it's a lot harder for

babies to be born this way."

"Can you do anything?" Hiccup asked her, his heart thumping in his own ears, as Astrid endured another contraction, her mind unaware of the conversation at hand.

"Babies born like this aren't uncommon," Petrine admitted as she focussed on the task at hand. "I've delivered a number of them myself, but I'll tell you now, this isn't going to be easy. Astrid," she said gently, touching Astrid's shoulder gently as the latest pain passed, and she looked at her with understanding eyes. "Astrid, listen to me. I'm going to try and\_ turn\_ the baby externally to see if it can be born head first-"

"Externally?" Hiccup repeated weakly; beads of sweat popping up on his forehead as his eyes flicked between the midwife and his petrified wife upon the bed. "What does that mean?" he asked; his throat tightening as he spoke. Astrid's frightened gaze met the midwife's as Hiccup asked this question. Seeing the identical looks of terror of the parent's faces, Petrine took Astrid's hand in her own, patting it reassuringly.

"It means I'm going to try and turn the baby into the correct position needed for delivery from the outside," Petrine explained calmly, continued to pat Astrid's hand as she spoke. "What I'm going to do, dear," Petrine gently took her hand out of Astrid's and softly touched her belly in demonstration, "is apply a lot of pressure on your stomach and carefully try to turn the baby as best as I can," she demonstrated this further to the attentive gazes of everyone in the room. "\_Hopefully\_ this will move the baby into the position we need it to go in for delivery-"

"Hopefully?" Astrid inquired; her voice shaky.

"Not all babies respond to this method," Petrine explained gently. "Some of them tend to slip back into the position they were in before, but it's always worth a try. It \_is\_ going to hurt though, Astrid, I won't lie. It's entirely up to you if you want to try it."

Astrid frowned thoughtfully as she looked over at Hiccup, his own eyes narrowed in thought. She looked over at Petrine, patiently waiting for her decision as she sat ready beside her.

"Do you think this might help?" she asked.

"I'm hoping it will," Petrine replied with a nod. "It's better to try this than not at all."

Astrid contemplated this for a moment, before another contraction suddenly gripped her stomach that was even sharper than the previous one, and as the pain passed, she nodded at Petrine.

"Just try it."

Petrine nodded, before she quickly stood up and began barking out instructions as swiftly as she could before she turned back to the anxious couple.

"Alright, Astrid, I want you to lie back as flat as you're able to

go," Petrine explained, "and relax as much as you can. Try not to tense your stomach up" she added, as she watched Astrid's upper body tense at the prospect of what was coming. "Tensing will just make it worse. Hiccup," she said, flicking her mud brown eyes in his direction, "take her hand and support her shoulders as much as possible." Nodding mutely, Hiccup quickly grabbed hold of Astrid's hand firmly, and used his other arm to place around her shoulders, heart in his throat. "Ansfrida," Petrine said quickly, without looking up from the task at hand, "take her other hand. Val, come and help me."

Clasping her daughter's other hand, Ansfrida smiled down at her daughter gently from her place beside her, while using her other hand to stroke her hair, sticky from the sweat upon her forehead, away from her face. In front of her, Valka took her position beside the midwife, face set in determination, equal to the midwife's.

"We're going to wait until another pain hits, and then we're going to use that to try and turn the baby," Petrine said, hands set on Astrid's swollen belly. "Be warned, this is going to be painful."

"I'm already in pain, it can't be much worse," Astrid said quietly, as she looked at her husband and mother. "I'm scared," she told them timidly, tears of fright burning at the corners of her eyes. Swallowing thickly, Hiccup raised her hand to his lips and kissed it fiercely, eyes set in determination as he looked into her frightened blue depths.

"Petrine is just turning the baby, Astrid, you're going to be fine," he reassured her tenderly, ignoring the pangs of fear within his own belly. "I'm right here. I'm not going anywhere."

A small smile appeared at the corner of Astrid's lips at this, before another severe pain suddenly shot through her stomach without warning, causing her to cry out in agony. Jumping at the chance, Petrine quickly took the ball of her left thumb behind what she felt was the head, and with the fingers of her right hand, slowly, yet firmly with both hands, felt her way around the stomach, firmly turning the baby as best as she could, to the loud screams of Astrid, who held onto Hiccup and Ansfrida's hands so tightly, they turned purple. Face screwed up in concentration, Petrine manoeuvred the baby around, and as a look of triumph reached her face, it quickly vanished as the baby slipped back into its original position.

"Damn it to Hel!" she swore angrily as the contraction passed.

"What happened?" Astrid asked breathlessly, sweat dripping from her forehead in waves as she looked at the midwife. She moved a bit and a wave of nausea hit her as pain shot through her stomach causing to fall back onto the pillows, her face pale.

"Is she alright?" Hiccup asked Petrine frantically, watching as Astrid's face paled to the colour of freshly fallen snow. "I thought you said it was safe?"

"It is," Petrine reassured him, as she checked Astrid's forehead, causing her to glance up at the midwife with a small smile. "But it can make a person feel sick afterwards." She sighed as felt the bump once more. "This baby is more stubborn than I realised" she said with

a sigh, "it slipped straight back into the same position again. I couldn't get it turned all the way."

"Try it again," Astrid breathed painfully, causing Hiccup to gulp and look down at her with eyes full of terror.

"We'll find another way, Astrid," Hiccup began helplessly, only to be cut off by Astrid's fiery gaze towards him, made even more fierce by the sheen of sweat shining on her brow, sticking her blonde hair to her clammy skin.

"Do it again," she repeated to Petrine, who was looking torn at what to do. "I'm not losing this baby!"

"Astrid, the baby can be born the way it is-" her mother started nervously.

"Try it again," she pleaded to the midwife. "Please."

"Astrid, if we keep doing it, it could cause damage to you or the baby. More to you than anything-"

"Just once more," Astrid insisted, flinging her hand out to hold onto Petrine's with a pleading gaze. "If it doesn't work, we'll let the baby come the way it wants. Just try it."

Taking a deep breath, Petrine looked over at Valka, who nodded in agreement, before she sighed, and stood up, ready to have another try. Hiccup and Ansfrida instantly took hold of Astrid's hands once again, as another pain rippled through Astrid's body like a stone flung into water. Astrid screamed as Petrine's hands firmly grasped the bulge beneath her belly, tongue out in concentration as she tried with all her might to turn the life inside, inch by inch, in careful concentration.

As the pain reached its peak, Astrid rose slightly from her position, her mind and mouth screaming against the agony she was enduring. Tears streamed down her cheeks just as fresh beads of sweat broke out on her forehead, her skin white and clammy as the pressure in her abdomen reached intensities that even Astrid could barely handle. Gripping onto Hiccup and Ansfrida's hands in mindless panic, Hiccup quickly looked up at Petrine, eyes blurred with tears of fear and panic

"STOP!" he yelled hysterically. "Stop, this isn't working!" Beside him, Ansfrida was looking down at her daughter, her face as white as a sheet.

"I've almost got it..." Petrine said frantically, turning the bulge a bit more before her eyes suddenly lit up. "...Thank Thor!" she cried, "the baby has been turned. It's now in a good position for birth." She looked upwards with a heavy sigh of relief. "Thank Freya and the gods, they have come through," she mumbled softly, so that only Hiccup could hear her, and he muttered a quick prayer under his breath as well. \_Thank gods\_, he thought, \_it worked.\_

"Is it alright?" Astrid's weak voice asked from the bed. Startled, Hiccup looked down at the bed to see Astrid, drenched in tears and sweat, painfully trying to sit up, despite the look of pain and exhaustion evident in her eyes. She gave a moan as pain shot up her



stomach, eyes clenched tight in agony.

"Don't move, Astrid," Hiccup said quickly, as he wrapped an arm around her shoulders. "You need to rest before the next pain."

"Is the baby alright?" she repeated to Petrine, ignoring Hiccup's advice.

"The baby's fine, dear," she reassured her soothingly, as she gently probed her stomach. "See?" she said, guiding Astrid's hand to one spot on her stomach, where the heart beat was clearly there, although beating a little slow. Astrid sighed in relief, before collapsing back onto the pillows.

"The heart beat is a little slow because of the intrusion," Petrine explained to her calmly, "but the baby is fine. It's a stubborn one!"

"Thank Thor for that," Astrid replied groggily, her eyes barely able to stay open as she spoke. Noticing Hiccup's piercing gaze on her, though, she looked at him with a small smile, before she took his hand in her own with as much strength as she could muster, given her condition.

"You look like you're about to faint," she joked feebly, kissing his knuckles lightly. "Childbirth too much for you?"

"How can you joke like this, Astrid?" Hiccup asked her incredulously, wrapping his arm around her shoulders, and pulling her close to his chest, where she lay contentedly. "Do you have any idea how much you scared me?!" he exclaimed tearfully, as tears threatened to spill from his bright green eyes. "I can't lose you, Astrid!"

"I had to do something, Hiccup," Astrid said quietly, lifting her azure eyes to meet his emerald ones. "I couldn't just let anything bad happen."

"You don't call that bad?" Hiccup said weakly, his mind recalling Astrid's agonised screams. "I've never heard screams like that in my life, Astrid, how-" He was cut off by Astrid's lips on his.

"It's alright, babe," Astrid said gently, stroking a strand of auburn hair away from Hiccup's damp brow, before another pain suddenly shot through her, incapacitating her in an instant, as she screamed through the contraction which was just as bad as the previous ones.

Astrid endured contraction after contraction for hours after this still, as the last rays of sunlight began to fade away from the wall behind them, to be gradually replaced by moonlight, as the moon began to rise in the sky. It had been almost 24 hours and, finally, an end was in sight.

"She can't take much more of this," Valka whispered to Petrine, as she looked back to Astrid, almost drained from exhaustion upon the bed, Hiccup pale and clammy, beside her. "At this rate, she'll be too tired to push."

"I know," Petrine said nervously, with a quick look towards her. "I'm doing all that I can, though." She quickly turned as she heard Astrid

moan loudly behind her, causing her to quickly rush over to her and drop to her knees to check on progress.

"I see the head!" she excitedly announced, looking up at Hiccup, whose bloodshot eyes widened in relief. "It's time to push, Astrid, you're almost there!" She cast her gaze around to Ansfrida and Valka. "I'm going to need help" she said quickly, and Ansfrida looked back at her daughter quickly before rushing forward to help, while Valka took hold of Astrid's other hand.

"Astrid, listen to me." Petrine said quickly the exhausted woman on the bed. "I \_know \_you're exhausted, but you have to do this. The baby is coming very fast and considering everything it's been through, this baby \_has \_to come out. Do you understand, Astrid?"

Through the mire that was her exhausted mind, Astrid nodded, and sitting up against the pillows, she braced herself for the final parts of what had been a \_very \_long labour. Adrenaline dwindled, though; Astrid could barely find the strength to push.

"You can do this, Astrid," her mother told her firmly from her place on the floor. "This baby \_has\_ to come out. Find whatever strength you have left and use it!"

"I can't do it," she said weakly, exhaustion taking over. "I can't."

"Yes, you can!" Hiccup said fiercely, as he kissed her forehead gently. "You didn't go through everything you did earlier to turn the baby around, just to give up when they're almost here." He looked at Astrid with a fire in his eyes that Astrid had never seen before, making her silent as she listened to him. "I know you're tired, sweetheart, but this baby \_has\_ to come out. Find any strength you have left and use it!"

A new wave of adrenaline kicked in as Astrid saw the tears forming at the corner of Hiccup's eyes. Sitting up quickly, Astrid held Hiccup and Valka's hands firmly, before pushing with as much strength as she could gather.

"That's it, Astrid!-" Petrine shouted, "-keep going, keep going, the baby's heads out, come on!"

"You can do it, Astrid, come on!" Hiccup said encouragingly, supporting his wife as much as he was able, but feeling useless all the while.

Breathing heavily, Astrid bore down with all her might, screams erupting from her mouth as determination filled her mind through the haze of downiness threatening to consume her. She was barely aware of Hiccup's encouraging yells beside her, as she pushed as hard as she could.

"One more, Astrid, one more!"

Sweat dripping off her face, Astrid bore down one last time, and within moments, she finally felt the pressure below leave her as a tiny baby fell into Petrine's waiting hands.

The baby wasn't breathing.

"Oh no you don't little one," Petrine said sternly, as she quickly rushed over to a table in the corner of the room, holding the pale baby firmly in her hands, Valka rushing after her, her face the colour of off milk. Quickly placing her mouth over the babies, she gave the tiny newborn a few breaths into the tiny mouth.

"Hiccup," Astrid sobbed, turning her gaze to her husband, tears rushing down her cheeks as she watched her new baby lying motionless on the table. Hiccup was stone-faced and silent as he watched the midwife trying in all her power to help his baby, tears rolling down his own pale cheeks as he held Astrid's hands firmly.

"Please, no. Help it," Astrid choked, her cheeks wet with sweat and tears; the pain she still felt from the birth all but forgotten in the terrifying moment. After what felt like hours, Astrid and Hiccup's eyes suddenly snapped to a loud startled gasp at the table, which was immediately followed by a loud piercing scream as the baby began to cry; the noise echoing around the room. Hearing the sound, Astrid burst into tears, bringing a hand up to her mouth as tears streamed down her cheeks unchecked. Beside her, Hiccup let out the breath he didn't know he'd been holding, letting out a sob of his own.

"Just being stubborn, huh?" they heard Petrine say, a hint of a smile in her tone, "I see how it is."

Hiccup and Astrid watched anxiously as Petrine wrapped the little baby in a bundle of blankets, before turning around to face them; a wide smile etched onto her face.

"Congratulations, Hiccup, Astrid, you have a baby girl," she said smiling.

"A girl?" Astrid whispered in amazement as more tears quickly filled her eyes, before spilling over onto her cheeks. "Do I really have a girl?" she asked again, a sob escaping her lips as Petrine approached them, the baby girl still wailing in her arms.

"You really have a girl, Astrid," Petrine said with a slight laugh, as she carefully placed the howling infant into Astrid's waiting arms, who gasped at the sight of her now healthy newborn, tears of joy spilling down her cheeks unchecked.

"A girl," Hiccup echoed tearfully, his heart still beating rapidly as he peered into the blankets to see his newborn daughter for the first time. Seeing her little face, his breath caught in his throat, and sniffing, he reached up to scrub the tears off his face. She was beautiful.

Sure, Siri had been beautiful too as a baby, but this little girl already had something, and Hiccup couldn't quite put his finger on it; that made her just radiate beauty. Minutes old, her skin was tender and perfect with a bright rosy hue bright on her cheeks, making it look like she was blushing. Her body was so tiny and delicate that the blankets swarmed her, but as he touched her, her hand gave a little start, flexing the tiny digits like little stars and her eyes opened to goggle up at her parents in wide eyes astonishment, her little pink mouth opened wide as if intrigued by

what she saw. Her eyes were a shade of pale blue, but as Hiccup noticed that there was just a hint of a greenish tinge behind the blue. He reached up to brush the tiny curve of her rosy cheek, before stroking up towards the small mess of auburn locks upon the top of her head as love grew in his heart the more he touched her.

"She looks like you, you know," Hiccup was started out of his reverie, and he looked down up at Astrid-exhausted, sweaty and dishevelled- but smiling as she saw the look in his eyes.

"You think so?" He looked down at the baby, held tightly in Astrid's arms and smiled widely as he took note of her features again. Seeing how the blankets swarmed her, though, the smile faded slightly. "She's so tiny." Hiccup said quietly, not taking his eyes off the precious bundle in his wife's arms. Noticing the tone of nervousness in his voice, Petrine gave him a reassuring pat on the shoulder.

"I wouldn't worry about that, Hiccup," she told him with a smile. "Despite everything that's happened, she's quite healthy. She'll be just fine."

"What about being born so early, though?" Astrid asked, finally flicking her eyes up from the baby.

"Hiccup was born earlier than her, dear," Valka said with a proud smile at her new granddaughter. "If she breathed for us that quickly, she'll be just fine."

"She's a tough little thing, that's for sure," Ansfrida said with a relieved smile.

"We'll have to think of a name now," Astrid said with a smile, as she glanced back down at the previous bundle in her arms, love radiating in her eyes.

No sooner had Astrid said that, Hiccup's eyes lit up as a name sprung in his mind as he looked down at the beautiful baby girl. Opening his mouth to say it aloud, though, he was soon cut off by the sound of a moan emitting from Astrid's lips. Snapping his head fearfully in her direction, he saw her stomach clench tightly, and knowing what it was, quickly took the baby out of her arms, just in time, as the slippery mess of the afterbirth suddenly made its escape from Astrid's body into a bowl held by a quick thinking Petrine. Taking one look at it, Hiccup suddenly blanched and turned away as the taste of bile rose to the back of his throat, which he quickly swallowed to attempt to rid of the nausea he felt. He never could look at the mess that was the afterbirth.

"Sorry, Hiccup," he heard Petrine say behind him apologetically, "should have warned you."

"I'm fine," Hiccup said, turning back to watch her take the bowl away, before she returned to check on Astrid, who was suddenly looking more exhausted than any of them had seen in their life.

"Astrid, because of what happened, I'm just doing to do some checks to see that everything is alright," Petrine explained, as she began to feel around the outside of Astrid's stomach. "Everything seems to be fine, but after a birth like that you can't be too

careful."

"It's fine," Astrid muttered sleepily as she resumed her task where the midwife slowly felt around the outside of Astrid's stomach, frowning slightly, before doing an internal check, much to Astrid's discomfort. Beside her, Hiccup held his baby girl tightly, watching this with nervous eyes.

Petrine poked around for a bit, her eyes narrowed in concentration, and after a few minutes, her eyes widened slightly.

"Hmm," she muttered quietly, quickly taking her hands and probing Astrid's stomach slightly from the outside once more. She sighed, making Hiccup's heart jump in his chest. Astrid's stomach clenched.

"What is it?" Hiccup asked quickly, looking from the midwife to Astrid.

Petrine sighed slightly and looked up with a faint ghost of a smile. "Despite everything, Astrid is perfectly fine," she said, making Hiccup let out a sigh of relief. "There are no complications that will present a big problem, but..." She trailed off, apprehension clear in her tone.

"But what?" Astrid probed her; her hands slightly shaky with worry. Beside her, Hiccup was turning pale again.

"I'm afraid that trying to turn the baby around and the complications you've experienced has caused a lot of damage physically," Petrine said slowly. Astrid's heart shuddered. She had a feeling where this was leading, and she felt Hiccup's hand tighten in hers as he did as well. "I'm afraid," Petrine continued nervously, "that you may never be able to have any more children."

Astrid nodded silently as she took in Petrine's words. To be honest, she wasn't surprised. After what she had just been through, she had had a feeling that this would be the outcome, and to her own surprise, it didn't trouble her. Looking over at Hiccup told her that he had been expecting the same thing, although there was a look of slight disappointment in his eyes. Taking a deep breath, Astrid looked up at the midwife with a small smile.

"We have 3 children," she said with a loving look towards Hiccup and the baby, "and that's more than I could have ever asked for. What do you think, Hiccup?"

Hiccup nodded. "We have a family, and it's more than I could have ever hoped for," he agreed, taking Astrid's hand in his own, and squeezing it tightly. "Besides," he added, with a quick glance back in Astrid's direction, "I never want to imagine Astrid going through that again." He shuddered; all traces of disappointment removed from his mind.

"You can say that again," Astrid murmured, with a slight groan as her body screamed in pain as she moved.

"You'll likely going to be sore for a few days, Astrid," Petrine explained to her. "So no getting up and exerting yourself around the house; on my orders," she added quickly, as Astrid opened her mouth

to cut in.

"Well, there go my plans of sneaking out," Astrid said, resulting in a snort from everyone in the room.

"Well, speaking of going out," Ansfrida cut in with a smile towards her daughter, "I'm going to go over to Fishlegs and Ruffnut's house to tell Siri and Leif they have a sister." She flicked her eyes over to Petrine. "Would it be alright if they came to see her tonight?" she asked the midwife hesitantly, as she looked from the midwife to the night sky outside.

"It's not too late," Petrine said, noting where the older Hofferson's gaze was at. "Besides, I think Siri and Leif might be in a panic if they don't get news soon."

Giving her a nod, Ansfrida quickly walked over to her daughter and bent down to give her a kiss on the forehead. "I'll be back soon, sweetie," she said with a warm smile towards her daughter, before giving her new granddaughter a kiss as well, before she turned to the door and headed out, feet pounding on the steps as she hurried down them, towards the front door. As the door closed from downstairs, Valka looked down at her sleeping granddaughter in Astrid's arms with a smile.

"So," she said, "what \_are \_you going to name her?"

"I'm not," Astrid started, before Hiccup, remembering his earlier idea, suddenly cut in before she could continue.

"What about Ingrid?"

"Ingrid?"

"Well, you said you liked the name when Siri was born," Hiccup explained to her, his smile unwavering, "and although you didn't like the name for her-"

"It wasn't that I didn't like the name," Astrid cut in quickly, "I just thought she needed something stronger, that's all." She glanced down at the slumbering baby girl in her arms, a warm smile spreading across her own lips. "But I think the name would suit this little girl just fine."

Hiccup smiled. "Ingrid it is then," he said cheerfully, looking down at his baby girl with a proud gaze, before looking up back up at Astrid tenderly. "Ingrid \_Valka\_ Haddock." he added, quickly turning his gaze to her mother, who suddenly froze upon hearing this. Noticing this, Astrid looked at Hiccup with a contented smile.

"It's perfect."

"Oh, Hiccup," Valka said gently, looking from her son to her daughter-in-law, "are you \_sure\_? I mean," she slowly got up and sat herself down beside them, peering into the blankets at the baby girl, "don't you want to name her after Ansfrida?" she added, tentatively.

"It's already \_my\_ middle name, Val," Astrid explained to her gently, as she reached out to take hold of the older woman's hand. "Plus mum

was the one who told me not to use her name if I ever had a daughter anyway. Besides," Astrid continued with a look at her newborn daughter, "I think she looks like you and she seems to a strong little thing. What better then to name her after you?"

"You know she's right, mum," Hiccup said sternly, seeing as his mother was about to protest, "-you might as well accept it."

Valka laughed, tears burning at the corner of her eyes, as she swiftly engulfed her son in to a tight hug, giving him a kiss on the cheek. Smiling widely, Hiccup instantaneously put his arms around his mother, hugging her close to him, before giving her a kiss on her own cheek. After a few moments, she sniffled and let go of him, rapidly wiping at the wetness on her cheeks as she smiled at the pair of them.

"Thank you, dear."

"You've earned it, mum," Hiccup told her kindly, as he squeezed his mother's hand tightly, "and besides, it could have been worse. She's lucky not to be named Hiccup Horrendous." He grimaced as his full name rolled off his tongue. "How did you come up with that one?" he asked her, aghast, "it's awful; even for a Viking!"

"Even I'd like to know that one," Astrid giggled, seeing the look of embarrassment pass over her mother-in-law's face as she groaned and placed her head in her hands.

"Blame your father for that one," she said, lifting her eyes slightly to see Hiccup and Astrid smirking at her. "I had no hand in it whatsoever!"

"Knew it had to be dad," Hiccup murmured, causing Astrid to bite her lip to keep from bursting out in howls of laughter, but that action made her body vibrate with silent laughter, causing her to hiss in pain.

"We'll leave you to rest for a bit, Astrid," Petrine cut in as she noticed that. "The kids will be here in a minute anyway, and we won't all fit up here; especially if Toothless comes in with them."

Striding over to the door, Petrine opened it before vanishing downstairs, Valka quickly following after her, seeming eager to get away from the naming talk as her face continued to blaze with embarrassment. As soon as the door clicked shut behind them, Hiccup and Astrid snorted with laughter, before looking back down at the bundle between them, still slumbering away, despite all the noise.

Taking his eyes off Ingrid, though, Hiccup's stomach clenched as he saw the exhaustion within Astrid's eyes. She looked as if she hadn't slept in weeks, and her face was still as pale as milk as she cooed at the baby girl in her arms, despite looking as if she was ready to doze off at any moment. Swallowing thickly, Hiccup reached out to take Astrid's hand tightly in his own, making her start and look towards him, her smile fading slightly as she saw the anxiety within his eyes.

"Astrid-"

"\_Don't\_, Hiccup," Astrid cut in gently, as she squeezed his hand tightly. "You heard what Petrine said; we're both\_ just\_ fine."

"But you almost weren't," Hiccup said thickly, the image of his pale daughter still etched into his mind. "I've never seen you soâ€|so pale andâ€|" he trailed off, tears filling his eyes.

"I know," Astrid replied softly, bringing her hand up to caress his face lightly, "but the point is we're fine \_now. \_I knowwhat you're going to say," she quickly added, seeing Hiccup open his mouth to refute her comment, "and I mean it, I don't mind not being able to have any more kids. We have three beautiful children and it's enough for me. Besides," she added with a cheeky grin, "we don't have to be careful anymore, do we?"

Hiccup's face flushed darkly at that, making Astrid howl with laughter at the sight of him, resulting in a further display of how dark a person's face can go with Hiccup's face nearing magenta as she continued to laugh. After a moment, though, her body screamed in pain at the stress it was under, and Astrid's laughter was cut off by a loud hiss of pain, causing Ingrid's arms to open at the noise, before gently closing again, without so much as a whimper.

"I don't think I'll be moving much the next few days," Astrid hissed, as she moved slightly to avoid a painful area in her stomach. Looking down at her newborn daughter again, though, she beamed, making her face light up. "She was worth it, though, wasn't she?" she said, raising her eyes to look at Hiccup who returned her smile, all earlier traces of anxiety vanishing from his bright green eyes.

"She's beautiful," Hiccup agreed with a tearful smile as he kissed the baby's cheek gently, before he reached out to cup Astrid's pale cheek with a hand. "I'm proud of you," he whispered as he leant his forehead on Astrid's, who blushed slightly, but held his gaze, despite the closeness. "I love you," Hiccup said.

"I love you, too," she replied, her voice wavering a little, as Hiccup captured her lips with his own in a gentle kiss, to which Astrid eagerly responded, kissing him back with more passion than Hiccup expected, considering how exhausted she was. Uncomplaining, though, he eagerly deepening the kiss himself, all the worries of the past 24 hours fading from his mind.

The sound of rushing footsteps on the stairs made them break apart quickly, each of them trying to hide their blushes as Siri, Leif and Toothless suddenly burst into the room, identical looks of excitement and worry etched on their faces.

"Hey, bud," Hiccup said, a grin spreading across his face at the sight of his dragon. Beside him, though, Siri only had eyes for her mother.

"Mum!" Running over to her, she engulfed her mother with a tight hug, to which Astrid eagerly returned, before Leif catapulted himself onto the bed with a loud \_thump, \_irritating Astrid's delicate stomach.

"Guys, don't jump around on the bed so much," Hiccup said quickly,



seeing Astrid's strained face, "your mother has had a tough time, and she's a little bit sore."

"Are you alright?" Siri asked her anxiously. "Aunty Ruff and Uncle Fishlegs were going to come and see you were okay, but Grandma said no."

Inwardly, Astrid was grateful for her mother's intervention, she wasn't in the mood for anyone else in the house right now, she thought, before she smiled reaching up to stroke her daughter's cheek. "I'm fine, sweetie, it was just a hard birth that's all." She moved the blanket away from Ingrid's sleeping face, before looking at her children's awed expressions. "I'd like you to meet your new baby sister; Ingrid Valka Haddock."

"Ingrid?" Siri's eyes lit up hearing the name. "You got to use it!"

"We certainly did," Hiccup said with a laugh, seeing the look of excitement on his eldest daughter's face, who was looking down at her new baby sister, a warm smile lighting up her eyes.

"She's so beautiful," she said quietly, reaching out to take the baby girl's hand, before she suddenly looked up at her parents with a grin. "No wonder Grandma Valka looked happy when we saw her." she said with a slight giggle. "You used her name."

"It took some convincing, too," Hiccup said incredulously, the expression on his face making his children laugh. "You'd think she had the worst name in the world."

"No, you do, daddy," Leif giggled, as he peered into the blankets to see his newborn sister, giving her a kiss on the forehead as he did so. "She's pretty," he said with a smile, making Hiccup and Astrid look at each other with a small smile of their own. Beside them, Toothless was doing the same, an excited toothless grin forming on his face at the baby.

"Thanks, buddy," Hiccup said dryly, as he stroked Toothless's nose beside him. "You just remember, though, that your middle name is Hiccup."

Leif frowned. "Oh, yeah."

Giggling at the comment from her brother, Siri finally looked up from her baby sister with a smug grin on her lips as she looked down at her brother.

"I win," she said. "I told you we'd get a baby sister didn't I?" She looked over at her father. "You're outnumbered now, daddy," she giggled. "It's me, mummy and Ingrid, against you and Leifey!"

Leif's eyes widened with horror upon his realisation, and he quickly looked from his sister's and mother, back to his father and Toothless, who were looking back at him in amusement as they watched him do this, uncertain of what his 3 year old mind was thinking.

"What's the matter, buddy?" his father asked him with a grin. Leif looked at him, aghast.

"Daddy, we're suwwounded by girls!"

\* \* \*

><p><em>IT'S A GIRL! :D I know many of you were asking and wanting a girl, so lucky for me I had decided another girl since the beginning of the story! Ingrid is going to be a very special little girl, and honestly she's my favourite out of all the Haddock kids, especially with her personality and her talents. There is a really beautiful storyline with her that I have planned that I can't wait to write, but sadly it's set for when she's 8 so it be awhile yet. Also, yes, I have thought this through, and although I have 3 kids in the story now, it will be fairly easy to balance because of Ingrid's personality which will be revealed gradually. This story is based on an old handwritten story of mine, and Ingrid was always going to be apart of the story, so please don't worry about the sibling relationship. I had to keep her in as I've always loved her character and so will you :) She's so different from the other two. <em>

\_Ok, I know a lot of you may be a bit surprised on the fact that Astrid can't have any more children and let me assure you this was done for a reason. With with no contraception in those days (as Astrid pointed out at the beginning of the chapter) I had to do something that would stop Astrid from having anymore children and in a discussion with author KateMarie999 last year, she felt this would be more realistic than Astrid just never having anymore, considering the dangers of turning a baby and childbirth those days, which resulted in a lot of mothers ending up like this. Because I feel bad for it, though, I did leave it to how **\*\*you all\*\*** interpret it, as Petrine said she **\*\*MAY NOT\*\*** be able to have anymore, not that she **\*\*COULD NOT\*\***, so it's not set in stone. It's entirely up to you how you interpret it :) Either way, though, this **\*\*will\*\*** be the last Haddock child. Any more and I think I'd have problems writing them all, but they do have 3 children. \_

\_Ok, so next chapter we are moving along quite a bit! Considering I've already had storylines with Siri and Leif as a baby, we're going to be skipping ahead **\*\*2 years\*\*** for when Siri is 11  $\hat{A}\frac{1}{2}$ , Leif is 5  $\hat{A}\frac{1}{2}$  and Ingrid has just turned 2 and it will involve the fact that had to occur in everyone's life, puberty, especially the one thing every girl dreads. It won't be a awkward or gross storyline, though, it's going to be mostly evolve around the fact that Siri is growing up and her parents getting used to the fact that she is. It will be pretty funny too with how Hiccup handles it :p I was stuck between this and another storyline, but have decided this is the one I'm sticking with as I think it's time to move things along :) Next chapter hasn't been fully worked yet, though, so please give me 2 or 3 weeks to write it, thanks! :)\_

\_Ok, so, **\*\*PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE DON'T FORGOT TO REVIEW! \*\***\_\_Last chapter I went down to only 7 reviews, down from 24 previous chapter and I admit I was a little saddened by it, as it was a huge decrease :( Just remember though, that **\*\*NO FLAMES\*\*** will be tolerated, but **\*\*KIND\*\*** constructive criticism is accepted. \_

\_Thanks for reading! :D \_

\_Apologies in advance to my male readers as this chapter details some awkward moments in a girl's life :p But don't let that stop you reading it as it is quite funny and is written very tastefully so it's not overly awkward or anything. This chapter deals with Siri reaching puberty and Hiccup is not happy about it! Especially when Snotlout and Tuffnut give him absolute hell for it! \_

\_So this chapter is about growing up and all that and let me assure some people (mainly my male readers) that this is the average time for this to occur. This chapter has skipped ahead just over 2 years, so Siri is 3 months off turning 12, Leif will be 6 in a month and Ingrid only turned 2 a few months before. \_

\_Enjoy the chapter!\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 34 " Puberty Blues<span>

\* \* \*

><p>"Where are you, my little dragon trainer?" Hiccup said loudly, as he tiptoed around the room, cautious of his metal leg upon the wooden floorboards. "You know I'm going to find you sooner or later, so you might as well give up!"<p>

A tiny giggle sounded from behind the wooden couch, causing a grin to form at the corner of Hiccup's lips as he continued around the room, pretending he hadn't heard.

"Hmm, I wonder where she is?" he said loudly, amusement evident in his tone as he slowly approached the couch. Hearing the \_tap tap tap\_ of a metal leg, though, 2 year old Ingrid quickly crawled backwards around to the other side of the couch, careful not to disturb her sister, reading quietly on the couch, her tongue sticking out in concentration as she tried not to get caught. Seeing the movement out of the corner of his eyes, Hiccup quickly jumped around the back of the couch.

"Gotcha!" he exclaimed cheerfully, only to find a few discarded toys. He frowned. "Hmm," he said, with a thoughtful frown, "I wonder where Ingrid has gotten too?" His eyes caught movement again; long auburn hair sticking out from the other side of the couch. He grinned. "Oh well, I guess she wins this time," he said loudly, allowing for a giggle from the little girl's lips again, before he suddenly jumped in front of her, causing her to squeal in delight, and try to run, only to be scooped into her father's arms, her squealing growing louder in volume as Hiccup dangled her upside down.

Siri's teeth gritted at the high pitched shriek emitting from her sister's mouth. \_Did she know how to do anything else?\_ She thought, as she lowered her eyes to concentrate on the book in her hands. She clenched her fists as Ingrid gave another squeal, making her move the book closer to her face. Couldn't they go outside and play?

"Gotcha, daddy!" Leif yelled, quickly tackling his father from behind, startling Hiccup into carefully dropping Ingrid on the floor, where she quickly got up and took off in another direction, Leif following close behind. Getting to the safety of the kitchen table,

where Astrid was watching the scene play out in amusement, the five year old stuck his tongue out at his father with a grin

"You cheated!" Hiccup accused him with a laugh, as he watched Ingrid giggling behind the safety of her brother.

"It's not cheating when you don't pay attention, babe," Astrid said cheerfully, looking down at the two kids. "I'd run if I were you two," she added with a grin, "daddy never loses."

Leif's eyes widened at the realisation before he quickly looked at his little sister with wide eyes. "Run, Ingrid!" he yelled, before scattering in the opposite direction as Hiccup made a lunge for him, and missed, causing him to fall flat on his face with a loud thump setting Siri's teeth on edge as she lost her page. Shaking her head angrily, she flipped through the book trying to recover her page, annoyance emanating from every part of her body at the noise in the tiny living room, which only heightened as her mother suddenly howled with laughter at his father's predicament.

"Oh sure, laugh at the invalid," Hiccup said dryly, as Astrid doubled over unable to contain her laughter, before Toothless, a large gummy grin on his own face, helped his rider up gently. Body tensed up, anger began to boil in the 11 year olds stomach as her patience began to grow thin.

"I'm...I'm sorry, Hiccup," Astrid choked out, wiping tears of mirth from her eyes, "but you make it too easy! When have you ever managed to outrun those two?!"

"Well, there's a first time for everything," Hiccup said with a shrug, before he suddenly picked Astrid up, who squealed as loud as her daughter, before he met his lips with hers in a swift kiss, making Leif look up at his parents in disgust.

"Yuck."

"Yucky," Ingrid echoed faithfully.

"Oh, is that so, my little warrior?" Hiccup asked her with a grin, placing Astrid back upon the ground, before suddenly lunging forward towards his youngest. She squealed in delight and darted away from him with agility her father could only dream of, making a break for the protection of her older sister on the couch.

"Help Siwi!" Ingrid screamed joyously, as both her father and brother attempted to catch her, "dada gwet me!"

"I'm not playing, Ingrid," Siri said in annoyance, not lifting her eyes from her page. "Hide behind mummy."

"Help, Siwi!" Ingrid repeated again with a giggle, reaching up to tug her sister's arm. "Dada gwet me!" She pouted when Siri continued to ignore her. "SIWI!"

"LEAVE ME ALONE, INGRID!" Siri suddenly snapped angrily, yanking her arm away from her little sister's grasp. "I DON'T WANT TO PLAY!"

The house was quiet. Siri's outburst had stunned her parents, jaws agape, while her brother looked on goggle-eyed. The 5 year old had

\_never\_ heard his sister yell like that before and honestly, it surprised him. The worst hit, however, was her youngest sister, whose wide green eyes were so full of tears in the short seconds afterwards that they could not hold back the deluge. The dam broke, and it was loud again.

"Siri, what in Thor's name was that all about?!" her mother exclaimed crossly, as Siri stood up angrily and threw her book down onto the wooden couch with a loud \_thump\_ which echoed loudly in everyone's ears.

"WHY DON'T YOU ALL JUST LEAVE ME ALONE?!"

Turning on her heel, Siri quickly raced up the stairs and into her room, slamming the door behind her with a booming \_crash\_, leaving her parents staring after her, flabbergasted as to what they had just witnessed. Astrid's shock soon turned into anger, though, as the Viking warriors stomach soon bubbled over in anger.

"Oh, no," she said angrily, as she made her way over to the stairs, "we're not letting that slide, young lady."

"What \_was\_ \_that?\_" Hiccup asked weakly, staring up his eldest daughter's closed room in astonishment, as he held a whimpering Ingrid tight in his arms, who was clutching at his leather vest tightly as she wept into his chest.

"I don't know, but I'm going to find out," Astrid said fiercely, as she stormed up to the 11 year olds room and barged in without so much as a knock.

"Ohhhh, Siri's in trouble," Leif said in awe as he watched his mother enter the room, her face a brilliant shade of red. He looked up at his father with wide eyes. "Why did she do that?" he asked his father in confusion. "Siri never yells like that. She usually loves to play."

"I'm not sure, buddy," Hiccup replied slowly, as he looked up at the closed door. "But I'm going to find out." Turning back to his son, he gently lowered a still whimpering Ingrid on the floor, and gave her a soft kiss on her auburn locks, before looking at his son with a small smile. "Can you look after her while I go see what this is about?" he asked the 5 year old, who gave his father a quick nod before Hiccup quickly raced up the stairs to see what was going on.

\* \* \*

><p>" I don't want to talk about it, mum!" Siri yelled as her mother entered the room.<p>

"I don't care if you do or not," Astrid replied stubbornly, as she pulled over a chair and dropped herself down upon it, "I just want to know why you did that."

"She annoyed me," Siri mumbled, crossing her arms across her chest as she plopped down on the bed.

Astrid raised an eyebrow. "She annoyed you? And that's a good reason for yelling at a 2 year old is it?"

Siri didn't answer.

"Seriously, Seer, what's wrong?" Astrid asked her, a little more calmly. "You've been acting weird all week, and this," she sighed, "this isn't like you."

"You wouldn't understand!" Siri exclaimed in frustration as she leapt off the bed to stare at her mother who looked back at her in surprise.

"What wouldn't I understand, Seer?" Astrid asked gently, seeing the look of anxiety slowly creeping into her daughter's eyes as she sat down again. "What's going on?"

"I-" the 11 year old trailed off as a faint blush rose in her cheeks, before twisting her hands around in her lap, a sure sign she was nervous about something. Slowly, she stood up, and with shaking hands, approached the end of the bed, and carefully peeled back the bed covers, her blush rising deeper into the hollows of her cheeks as she did so. Following her daughter's line of sight, Astrid's eyes suddenly widened in acknowledgement of the situation. \_So, it begins,\_ she thought.

"Ohhh," Astrid said slowly, understanding showing in her bright azure eyes as Siri awkwardly kept her eyes lowered so as not to meet her mother's eyes.

"I...I woke up to it this morning," she said hesitantly, as she slowly raised her eyes to meet her mothers'. "I... I didn't know what to do," she admitted with a mortified glance towards Astrid, "so I tried to hide it."

"Oh, Seer," Astrid reached out to stroke her daughter's blonde hair back with a reassuring smile, "you didn't need to hide this, it's only-"

"Oh gods."

Startled, Astrid and Siri whipped their heads around, only to meet the dazed form of Hiccup, standing motionless in the doorway. His eyes were locked on the bed sheets upon his daughter's bed as a dark flush rose heatedly on his cheeks.

"I...I don't think this is my place by the looks of it," Hiccup said awkwardly, slowly stepping back from the open doorway, the flush in his cheeks prominent even from his position.

"Hiccup," Astrid began gently, as she made her way over to him, "-it's not \_that \_bad." Hiccup raised his eyebrows in disbelief making her sigh. "Ok, maybe for you it is," she added quickly, "but I really think you should be here so we can explain it to her-"

"This isn't my place, Astrid," Hiccup protested weakly, looking from his wife to his humiliated daughter. "I'll...I'll just leave you to it. I have a... thing...to do," he stammered nervously, looking around for an escape, and taking it as he hurried toward the stairs, the heat still rising in his cheeks, making his face turn a dark shade of magenta.

"Oh, that's right; just leave me to do all the explaining!" Astrid

called after her retreating husband. "Coward!" Heaving an annoyed sigh, Astrid quickly turned back to her eldest daughter, still sitting nervously on the bed, her eyes carefully averted towards the downturned sheets beside her.

"Well, baby, it looks like it's you and me," Astrid told her with a small smile. "Now, let's have a talk, shall we?"

\* \* \*

><p>"Why are we going to Uncle Snotlout's?" Leif asked his father bewildered, as he, Hiccup, and Ingrid approached the house, just inside the village square. "What's wrong with Siri?" Leif added with a look up to his father, whose face was still bright red, despite the length of time it had taken to reach the house in question.<p>

"Something we'll have to get used to in a house full of girls," Hiccup replied with a slight shudder, as he moved Ingrid into a better position in his arms. The little girl had long since calmed down from the earlier incident, but was still sniffing every now and then.

Leif frowned. "Why?"

Hiccup sighed. "You'll find out one day, buddy," he said with a smile, "but I'm not the one who's going to be explaining it. I hope." he added in undertone.

"But why did we have to leave?" Leif persisted with a whine. "Me and Ingrid were beating you."

"Because your sister needs time to herself with mummy right now," Hiccup replied sternly, looking at his son with raised eyebrows, which promptly stopped his moaning. "Besides," he added with a soft sigh as he looked down at his whimpering little girl, "I think Ingrid might need to play with Bjorn for a little while. Get her mind off things."

Get her mind off things it did. No sooner had the three of them reached Snotlout and Anna's house, Ingrid's face immediately lit up upon seeing 2 year old Bjorn, sitting outside playing with 1 year old Idony, Tuffnut and Annika's daughter; with Tuffnut, Annika, Snotlout and Anna sitting around on the tiny front porch of the house. Before Hiccup could even muster up a hello to them, though, Ingrid was soon squirming out of his arms and running over towards the other two toddlers without a second thought.

"Hiccup!" Anna exclaimed with a smile as she saw them. "What are you doing over here?" She frowned. "Where's Astrid and Siri?"

"At home," Leif answered before Hiccup could open his mouth. He shrugged. "Daddy says it's a \_girl\_ thing."

"A girl thing?" Anna asked him, bemused. He shrugged slightly before running off to play with Eric and Sigmund, playing with wooden toy dragons on the steps of the house. As soon as he was out of sight, Anna looked at Hiccup, eyebrows raised. "Girl thing?" she asked again with a chuckle, "-what does he mean by that?"

Hiccup blushed again. "She...ergh...she got her..." he trailed off in embarrassment as Snotlout and Tuffnut looked up at him with wide eyed curiosity.

"Got-?" Anna begin, before her eyes suddenly widened in realisation and her mouth formed a little 'o' in understanding. "Ohhh," she said gently, "you mean she got a visit from her womanly friend?"

"Not sure I'd call it that," Hiccup mumbled, "but yeah" he sighed. "I walked in on her and Astrid after she yelled at Ingrid-"

"Siri yelled at Ingrid?" Annika cut in surprised, having missed the first part of the conversation. "That's not like her is it?"

"No," Anna quickly replied, "but something tells me it wasn't exactly her fault." She smiled knowingly towards Annika, who frowned for a moment, before her own eyes widened in understanding.

"Ohhhh," she said quietly. "Well, no wonder you escaped." she added with a grin.

"I didn't escape," Hiccup said hesitantly, as Anna began to lead everyone inside as it began to rain lightly, "I just didn't think it was my place is all."

"What isn't your place?" Snotlout interrupted with a frown, as he looked between his wife and chief as he followed them through the door. "What are we talking about?"

"Puberty, Snotlout," Anna replied absentmindedly, as she ushered the horde of children into the house.

"Puberty?" Snotlout asked in confusion, "what are talking about that for?-" he trailed off as he saw the mortified look on Hiccup's face, and as realisation struck him, he and Tuffnut looked at each other with identical grins of mischief; a look that didn't go unnoticed by their wives.

"Don't you even dare, Snotlout Jorgenson," Anna warned him with a pointed finger, "it's not funny."

"Oh come on," Snotlout said, a grin spreading across his face, "can't we even congratulate Hiccup on his daughter becoming a woman?"

Hiccup covered his burning face in his. "She is not a woman!" Hiccup spluttered, causing Snotlout and Tuffnut to guffaw at his reaction. "She's only eleven!"

"She's almost twelve, Hiccup," Anna explained to him gently, throwing her husband a foul look as he guffawed loudly beside her, "and even though she's not a woman yet-"

"Something else says otherwise," Snotlout replied with a chuckle, which was quickly cut off by a dangerous look given to him by his irate wife, before she turned her attention back to Hiccup.

"-You don't have to worry about yet," Anna continued, with another look towards Snotlout, "it's only just starting. She's still your little girl for now-"



"Until she discovers boys," Snotlout cut in with a shrug "And something tells me that won't be very far away!"

What little colour remained in Hiccup's cheeks had completely drained away by this. "But she's so young," Hiccup protested weakly, uneasiness creeping into his stomach, "shouldn't this be happening, you know...later?"

"I was the same age as Siri when it happened to me," Anna explained gently to the frantic father. "It's different for every girl-"

"Don't I know it," Tuffnut interjected with a shudder. "Ruffnut was the same age too. I swear she flirted with every boy she met afterwards."

"That's an image I could have lived without," Hiccup murmured with a shudder of his own. Annika nodded in agreement.

"Me too."

"What?" Tuffnut protested, as a grin suddenly formed on his face, "-I'm just saying that Siri will be into guys very soon-"

"-and we all know how much Siri hangs around with Len," Snotlout finished with a mischievous grin. "We're just saying it's only a matter of time."

"You do realise that Len is close to puberty then too, don't you?" Hiccup countered quickly, casting a glance over to his friend, who just shrugged and continued to grin like an idiot.

"So?" he replied, "I have all boys. It won't be as bad for me!"

Hiccup raised his eyebrows. "You do remember how boys get around girls don't you?"

"Isn't it the same for girls with guys?" Snotlout replied, not fazed in the slightest by Hiccup's arguments. "And with Siri and Len being best friends-"

Hiccup's eyes widened suddenly with the realisation, before burying his face in his hands, emitting a loud groan. "Thor help me."

"Oh, will you two stop it?" Anna snapped heatedly as the two men howled with laughter, ",you're making this worse than it is. Besides," she added with a quick glance towards Tuffnut, "how will you feel when Idony reaches this age? I bet you won't be laughing then."

Tuffnut's eyes widened as he cast his gaze to his 16 month old daughter playing quietly on the floor nearby with Ingrid and Bjorn; a wooden dragon doll firmly in her pudgy little hand.

"But... she's only one; it's years away yet!" Tuffnut protested rapidly. Looking from Anna's raised eyebrows to Hiccup's perceptive grin, though, he quickly snapped his mouth shut and said nothing else, much to Annika's amusement.

"That'll teach you, won't it?" she said with a giggle at his mortified expression. He glanced back at her, unamused.

"Not funny," he murmured; his eyes still firmly on his little girl, whose face was being completely hidden by a mop of curly red hair; courtesy of Annika, as she played.

"Great," Snotlout drawled, with a glance towards Anna, "now I'm on my own."

"You wouldn't have been if you'd left Hiccup alone in the first place," she countered.

"Where's the fun in that?"

"Urgh...I really should be heading home anyway," Hiccup piped up hopefully, as he looked out the window in the direction of his house, "Astrid should be finished explaining everything by now...I hope."

"Hiccup, it's pouring outside," Anna said quickly, taking note of the heavy sheets of rain pounding the tiny window, "you can't leave yet. Besides I think you should give them more time," she continued gently, seeing as Hiccup was about to protest. "Leif and Ingrid are having fun; you might as well leave them to it." She nodded to the two kids playing with their respective friends over by the fire pit in the middle of the room, and Hiccup sighed. Ingrid was a lot calmer now after the earlier incident and Leif was in his own little world playing with Eric and Sigmund. The only kid left out was Lennart; and he was reading a book on a chair nearby, anyway. Hiccup grinned at that. He and Siri were so similar; it was hard to believe he was Snotlout's son. He took after his mother alright.

"I guess so," Hiccup agreed with a sigh. "I don't really want to go home too soon before the girls are finishing talking anyway."

"Just think, Hiccup," Snotlout said grinning, as he patted Hiccup's shoulder gently, "you're going to have to go through all of this again when Ingrid is her age. How fun will that be?"

The whole room groaned. "SNOTLOUT!"

\* \* \*

><p>"<em>This,<em>" Siri exclaimed, wincing as a pain erupted in her lower abdomen "is my so called 'womanly friend? But it's awful!"

"Don't I know it," Astrid replied sympathetically as she watched Siri tense up with pain. "I've had the pleasure of it for over 20 years."

"You didn't tell me it hurts," Siri told her mother, accusingly, glancing up at her mother. "Does it hurt the whole time?"

"Thankfully, no," Astrid said, to Siri's great relief. "But you'll have a sucky day when they arrive. Luckily," she added quickly with a small smile, "we have something to help with those stomach cramps."

Pouring a bitter smelling tea into a mug, Astrid handed it to her with a smile. "Now, it doesn't taste all that great, but it will get rid of the cramps within half an hour and that's all that matters."

"Thanks," Siri said gratefully as she received the cup; grimacing slightly at the smell of it, before upending it in one gulp. She shuddered slightly as the bitter taste hit her sensitive tastebuds, but managed to swallow the concoction regardless of its horrible taste.

"There's plenty more where that came from," Astrid said as she took the mug away from her daughter. "In the cupboard downstairs, if you ever need it."

"How many times will I have to drink the stuff?" Siri asked, grimacing at the thought of drinking it again that day.

"Only once or twice," Astrid reassured her. "After that it will calm down."

Siri nodded, before she heaved a great sigh and flopped herself onto her back on the bed. "I didn't think this would happen so soon," she said. She glanced up at her mother. "I thought you said it happened later?"

"I told you that a year ago," Astrid reminded her softly, as she lay down on her back beside her daughter. "You're 12 in a few months, so no; it's around the normal time. I was only a bit older when it happened to me. It's different for every girl."

Siri nodded thoughtfully before she looked back at her mother with a small smile. "What..." she started nervously, "...what's puberty like?" she asked, a blush creeping up on her cheeks. "Will I start liking boys? I mean...I don't even like them; not in that way, anyway." She shuddered at the thought which made Astrid giggle slightly.

"That'll make your father happy," she joked. "But no, sweetie, you won't just suddenly like boys just because your body says you're a woman. It's weird like that."

"Thank Thor," Siri murmured with a nervous giggle, which made Astrid smile.

"You think you're glad?" she asked her daughter, making Siri frown in her mother's direction. "At least I don't have to give you 'the talk' again."

Siri's face flushed. "You don't have to give me that talk again, mum," the eleven year old choked out. "I think I know enough." She shuddered at the memory of her mother-daughter talk she was given less than a year before; her face darkening in the process. "It's just gross."

Astrid snorted with laughter, as she looked towards her daughter's humiliated expression. "I remember saying that at your age," she said with a grin. "The point is you won't always say that. But for now," she leant forward to kiss her daughter's forehead gently as she went to protest, "-I'm glad you are; and so will dad."

"Dad's going to have a heart attack," Siri said with a slight smile. "He already left pretty quickly earlier." Siri suddenly frowned as she remembered the earlier incident and looking over at her mother again, she bit her lip sheepishly. "I'll have to say sorry to Ingrid, won't I?" she asked her mother.

"Yes, you will," Astrid said firmly, causing Siri to sigh. "I don't care why you said it, it still wasn't on. You have to learn to control your mood swings."

Siri raised her eyebrows. "You can control them?" she asked in surprise.

"You can," Astrid nodded seriously. "But wanting to is a different story," she added with a wolfish grin.

Siri laughed. "I know what you mean," Siri agreed with a giggle. "All I want to do is go outside and throw my axe at some trees."

"That works," Astrid nodded with a laugh. "I do it myself. We can do that tomorrow if you want." She looked towards the window where the rain completely obscuring the scene outside as it came in down in heavy drops. "I doubt we'll be going outside today."

"Don't really care anyway," Siri admitted irritably, as her hand made its way down to her cramping stomach. "I don't even want to move right now." She looked at her mother. "When will this tea set in?" she asked desperately. "It hurts."

"Just give it some time," Astrid replied gently, as she sat up. "Just lie down for a little while and come down when you're ready. You'll get used to it." Siri raised her eyebrows incredulously at her mother making Astrid grin sheepishly. "Well, sort of used to it," Astrid added quickly, resulting in a laugh from her daughter. "I'll deal with your dad when he gets home."

Siri giggled, as she picked up her book from the bedside table, careful not disturb Midnight dozing away there. "Good luck with that."

\* \* \*

><p>"Well...it looks like the rain isn't letting up," Hiccup said with a sigh as he poked his head out the door. He turned around to face Anna and Annika standing right behind him. "Looks like we'll have to make a break for it."<p>

"You'll be soaked by the time you get home!" Anna exclaimed wide eyed. "Are you sure you don't want to wait?"

"He just wants to get home before Siri grows up even more," Snotlout chuckled obnoxiously from the table.

"Snotlout, I'm warning you, if you don't shut up, you're sleeping in the stables with Hookfang!" Anna exclaimed in annoyance, wheeling around to face her husband's annoying grin. "And if you think I don't mean it, try me!"

"Alright, alright, I'll stop," Snotlout said quickly, throwing up his

arms in defeat. "I was only kidding."

"Seriously Hiccup, why do you put up with that?" Annika said, with a nod in Snotlout's direction. "You\_ are\_ the chief after all."

"Because it's Snotlout," Hiccup said with a sigh. "He only thinks it's funny because he has no girls to fuss over." He suddenly grinned as he looked over at Snotlout, though. "But wait until he remembers how things will get when \_boys \_grow older." he added with a grin, making Anna, Annika and Tuffnut snort with laughter before they were interrupted by a loud \_crash \_over by the kitchen table, causing them all to wheel around to the source of the noise.

Hiccup groaned. "Or wait until they're at least old enough to get into their own trouble," he sighed. "Leif, what have you done?!"

Leif was in a heap on the floor beside the kitchen table, a hand to his nose. It seems the loud bang was the result of him and Eric running around the room without looking where they were going, resulting in a run in with the kitchen table.

"My nose hurts," Leif mumbled from behind his hand. "Is it bleeding?" he asked, moving his hand away his throbbing nose.

"No, buddy," Hiccup said with an exasperated sigh, as he helped his son off the ground. "You'll live. But your nose is as red as Hookfang's scales. Come on; we better get you home," he added, as he picked up his daughter and placed an arm around the 5 year old's shoulders.

"Good luck!" Snotlout drawled, as he hooted with laughter, making Hiccup swallow nervously, before he and Leif made a break for it, laughing loudly as the rain drops hit them, the only sound they could hear over the roar of the rain being Anna's furious voice.

"SNOTLOUT JORGENSEN!"

Snotlout blanched as he heard his wife's voice. Turning around slowly, he saw Lennart looking over at him over the top of his book.

"Dad; you know you're in trouble, right?" the 11 year old asked him. Snotlout swallowed uneasily.

"Crap."

\* \* \*

><p>"You don't have to hide; it's safe to come in." Astrid said with a chuckle, as she heard the front door open with a slight <em>creak.</em>

Hiccup frowned. "How did you know it was me?" he asked in surprise, as he cautiously entered the house; Leif and Ingrid rushing in after him out of the torrent of rain outside.

"No one in their right mind would hang around in this rain for no reason," Astrid replied logically as she looked up from her sewing.

She snorted at the sight of them. "You three look like drowned rats." She frowned as she took in her younger daughter, though, who was mostly dry thanks to Hiccup's vest which was covering most of her body. "Well, two of you anyway," she added with a smile, as she held out her arms for the toddler who happily reached out for her mother.

"I feel it," Hiccup grumbled as he peeled off the soaked vest from his body and threw it onto the floor next to Toothless, who was still where he was from when Hiccup had left, not moving from his spot. Seeing this, Hiccup shook his head with a grin.

"I think I'm wetter," Leif drawled uncomfortably as he waddled over to his mother. "I think I have water in my pants!" he added as he twisted around to look at his wet behind.

"I think you do too," Astrid giggled, as she felt her son's clothes, before spotting his bright red nose. She raised her eyebrows. "Alright," she sighed, "what did you do?"

"Lost an argument with a table," Hiccup replied with a wide grin, as Astrid gently prodded her son's nose, before shaking her head in amusement.

"I think you'll live," she said with a laugh, giving her son a gentle kiss in his wet hair. "I'd be more worried about these wet clothes, though," she continued quickly, feeling the clothes with furrowed brows. "Go and get changed, sweetie. Don't disturb Siri, though!" she added quickly, as Leif raced up the steps, "she's resting." Leif nodded before tip toeing past his sister's room warily, before racing into his own room, gently shutting the door behind him.

"Your hair is soaked too, sweetie," Astrid said quickly to her little girl before Hiccup could open his mouth, "Why don't you go and join Toothless by the fire?"

"Otay," Ingrid said with a smile as she slid off her mother's lap, before running off to join Toothless who moved over to let the two year old sit beside him with her toys. As soon as she was out of earshot, Hiccup turned his attention back to his wife who was looking back at him expectantly.

"So..." Hiccup began nervously, "...how is she?" He looked up at the closed door of his daughter's room. "Is she okay?"

"She's fine," Hiccup," Astrid replied gently, as took Hiccup's hand in her own. "She's just resting is all. Cramps," she elaborated, seeing Hiccup's perplexed look. "She's had some tea and is resting until they pass."

"Cramps," Hiccup repeated slowly with a sigh, looking at his wife helplessly. "Isn't she too young for all this? She's only eleven."

"She's going to be twelve in a few months, Hiccup," Astrid replied softly, as she reached up to stroke Hiccup's wet locks, "and like it or not, this is the normal age for all this to happen. I wasn't much older when it happened to me."

"To come on so suddenly, though?"

"Believe it or not, this was coming for a little while," Astrid explained gently. "Haven't you noticed that she's now up to your chest in height? Or that she's got a tiny bit of a chest now? Face it Hiccup, she's been growing up without you even realising it."

Hiccup sighed heavily. "I don't think I'm ready for this. She's still my little girl, no matter what her body is telling her."

"And she still will be for a few more years yet," Astrid said tenderly, as she caressed her husband's cheek. "She's barely twelve. It's not like she's going to be a hormonal teenager overnight." She chuckled as she saw the horrified look on her husband's face. "Babe, you knew she would have to grow up at some time," she chuckled, "you can't do anything about it."

"I know," Hiccup admitted unhappily, "and the way she hangs around with Len makes me even more worried that she'll be boy crazy before I know it."

"She isn't interested in boys yet, Hiccup," Astrid said calmly, "-and I wouldn't worry until she is."

"I'd rather face the Red Death again before that happens," Hiccup said, quite seriously, leading Astrid to snort loudly. "How am I going to cope when Ingrid gets to this age?!" he exclaimed in horror.

"Stop being so melodramatic." Astrid leant down to look into her husband's worried eyes with a warm smile. "She's still your little girl, Hiccup, no matter what you think. As for Ingrid-" she went on with a look towards the 2 year old, "-that's a \_long \_way away yet, so I don't know why you're worrying."

"You'd be worried too if you had Snotlout teasing you nonstop for hours about it," Hiccup mumbled, resulting in a chuckle from his wife.

"No wonder you're so nervous," she grinned. "That will teach you to go over to Snotlout's at a time this."

"Ha ha."

Astrid shook her head with a roll of her eyes, before she leant her forehead on Hiccup's with a warm smile. "Stop worrying, Hiccup; the time for boys hasn't come yet."

"What would I do without you?" Hiccup asked her with a grin.

"Be in a total panic," his wife replied with a laugh, before she brushed her lips against Hiccup's in a gentle kiss before breaking away to look into his emerald green eyes. "Now stop panicking."

"I \_told\_ you he'd panic," came Siri's voice from behind them, making the couple jump and turn their attention to their daughter, who was standing beside the couch with a slight grin on her lips. "Hey daddy."

"Hey, baby," Hiccup said with a smile as he held out his arms for her, "how are you feeling?"

"Better," she replied, as she sat on her father's lap. "That stuff is great, mum," she added with a glance to her mother, "my cramps have stopped."

"Don't I know it," her mother answered with a laugh, before the eleven year old turned her eyes back to her father.

"Dad, just so you know, I am not interested in boys just yet!"

"Not even Lennart?" her father asked her.

"He's my friend, daddy," Siri replied, horrified. "Gross." She gave a mischievous smile. "I guess he is cute, though," she added with a grin, causing Hiccup's face to pale suddenly.

"I'm joking, daddy," Siri giggled. "Len is cute, but I don't like him in that way."

Hiccup's heart felt it was about to jump out of his chest after that. "I hate puberty," he mumbled, causing Siri and Astrid to howl with laughter at his terrified face, before a little voice interrupted them from the floor.

"Mummy, I wet,"

Quickly looking down at her daughter, Astrid saw Ingrid's hair was still clinging to her face, the dampness in her hair barely budging despite the warmth of the fire.

"No wonder, sweetie," Astrid replied with a laugh as she noticed her position, "you were supposed to sit by the fire, not play with Toothless." She reached out her arms for her daughter, before picking her up to settle her on her lap. "I'll have to get you a towel or this hair will never dry. You're soaked!" she added as she took a bit of the toddler's hair in her hands making the young girl giggle.

"Ingrid," Siri said quickly from her place on Hiccup's lap, before she took her sister's hand in her own. "I'm sorry I yelled at you. I was being mean. Can you forgive me?" She gave her sister a pout which in turn made the toddler erupt in a fit of giggles.

"Siwi otay!" the little giggled, just as Leif reappeared with a towel in hand which he gave to his mother.

"I got Ingrid a towel," the little boy said kindly before he looked at his older sister. "Daddy said you have girl problems" he teased.

"Yes I do," Siri replied, as she noticed Leif's nose. "What did you do to your nose?" she asked, "run into a wall again?"

"No!" Leif exclaimed in annoyance, before he blushed. "A table," he added, a little quieter causing Siri to giggle.

"You're clumsier than dad!"

"I am not!"



"Don't start," Hiccup interjected sternly, causing both of them to stop, but it didn't stop Siri from pointing at Leif's nose with another giggle.

"Imagine you at puberty!" she said.

Leif looked at her in bewilderment. "What's pu...pubuty?" He looked at his parents who exchanged a nervous glance, before Astrid gave a little cough of embarrassment.

"You'll find out when you're older, sweetie," Astrid said quickly, her face turning redder by the minute as she glanced down at her younger daughter, who was thankfully not paying attention.

"But what is it?" he asked curiously, looking back towards his sister. "Is it what you have?" he asked, uncertain.

"Yep," Siri answered. "It means you're growing up."

"That's an easier way to put it," Hiccup admitted to Astrid quietly, who inwardly sighed with relief before Leif continued to look at his sister in confusion.

"Huh?"

Siri groaned. "It means you'll start to like girls!" she exclaimed impatiently.

"I already like them. Kelda is my friend," Leif said with a frown.

"Not that way!" Siri exclaimed, before she brandished a hand towards her parents, sitting close to each other on the couch, "I mean like mummy and daddy!"

Leif's face turned to a look of horror.

"EWWWWW!"

\* \* \*

><p><em>Poor Leif, I think Siri has scarred her brother for life :p Anyway, I hope you all liked this chapter, especially with Hiccup's worries about his daughter growing up :) I always imagined he'd panic when this happened and I want to thank supersandman86 for giving me the idea for the quote Hiccup says about preferring to deal with the Red Death again than have Siri reach this stage. You have no idea how much I loved the idea of him saying that! Siri has also already had 'the talk' as you would have figured out, but Astrid would have needed to explain what was going on again as it would have been a bit of a shock the first time, so no Astrid didn't repeat herself. Also, for anyone wondering why Ruff and Fishlegs were absent from the chapter, it's mainly because I couldn't imagine Fishlegs teasing Hiccup and it was easier with just Snotlout and Tuffnut at the forefront of the teasing. <em>

\_Ok, so next chapter will take place 3 months after this chapter when Siri turns 12 and gets the one thing everyone's been waiting forâ€|her first rideable dragon! Now I can't tell you what she gets

(although I think most people will guess beforehand), but there is an issue of naming the dragon which I still haven't done yet. So if anyone doesn't mind knowing the species and gender of the dragon to help me with a name, please feel free to PM me or else this chapter will be very late if I can't come up with a suitable name! As a part of this chapter, Siri will also join in with some dragon racing as a sort of initiation of getting her first dragon as I know a few guests have been bugging me about adding the sport into the chapters :p To be honest, it was a great idea for this chapter, so thank you!

—  
\_Alright, so, \_\_\*\*PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO REVIEW when you get the chance! That's all I ask when you read my chapters :)\*\*\_\_ Please remember though, that NO FLAMES will be tolerated, although \_\_\*\*KIND\*\*\_\_ constructive criticism is accepted. Next chapter should be up in 2 weeks or so, hopefully. Depends on whether or not I get a name for this dragon of Siri's! \_

\_Thanks for reading! :D\_

\_\*\*Update\*\* (28/2/2015): Thanks to everyone who have given me suggestions for names for Siri's dragon, but as of last night I have already been inundated with many awesome names and I have now chosen the perfect name :) \_

### 35. Chapter 35: Welcome to Dragon Training

\_Apologies for the late posting guys! I was trying to put this chapter up last week, but after a few days where I was too tired to write, especially after I had my first casual teaching day, I was running behind. I also had some writer's block, so sorry again!\_

\_Anyway, this chapter is about Siri finally getting her first rideable dragon! Many of you most likely would have guessed her dragon by now, but I hope you're all satisfied by what she gets anyway. I also apologise for the fact that this chapter isn't as good as usual (in my opinion anyway), but I tried my best considering how many changes occurred within the chapter, but it's at least entertaining enough :) I also promised in the previous chapter that Siri would take place in some dragon racing, but there was no place for it once I started writing this chapter and that will be now be next chapter instead. In this chapter, Siri has just turned 12, Leif is 6 and Ingrid is 2 and a half. \_

\_A note before we begin. I know in the books Snotlout and Hiccup are cousins, but there has been no evidence of that relationship in the movies, so in my canon they are \*\*NOT cousins, \*\*which is why I am joking about the Siri and Len relationship being possible, from Hiccup's perspective anyway. Only time will tell where these two go I'm afraid. \_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 35 â€" Welcome to Dragon Training<span>

\* \* \*

><p>Siri had never been so excited in her entire life as she was

today. Sure, the twelve year old had been excited lots of times before, but today she was<em> really<em> excited. Having woken up at sunrise, with the warmth of the sun's rays hitting her face, Siri's excitement was built and her heart began to pound in her ears as she realised today was the day she'd been waiting for her whole life. It was the day she was to get her very first rideable dragon and join the dragon training academy with her parents, and there was no way she was going to wait any longer!

Throwing on the clothes she'd laid out the night before, the twelve year old hurriedly tied back her hair in its signature plait, before racing out the door to her parent's room, where she pounded excitedly on the door.

"Mum, dad, wake up! Its morning you know!"

Hiccup groaned as his daughter's loud banging woke him from his slumber. Beside him, Astrid mumbled something unintelligible before turning her back towards the door, burying her head into the pillow to drown out the loud noises echoing in her head.

"Dad!" Siri's voice whined from the other side of the door.

"We're aware it's morning, Seer," Hiccup said, groaning. "We were just hoping you didn't. Why don't you come back when it's...I don't know...later?" Following Astrid's lead, Hiccup buried his head under the pillows with a moan. "Or when we're more awake," he mumbled.

"Oh come on, dad!" Siri exclaimed cheerfully. "Where's your sense of excitement?"

"Asleep," Hiccup answered drowsily, "like it should be."

"Oh, just get up already, Hiccup," Astrid moaned as she dragged herself out of bed. "You know she won't give up until we do."

Outside the door, they heard Siri squeal, "Thanks mum! I'll get the others up!" before her feet pattered down the hallway to bang on her siblings doors instead.

"I know she's excited and all, but couldn't she have waited just a little longer?" Hiccup asked his wife, turning his attention to the sunlight creeping through the window above him. "I mean...it's not even fully light yet."

"She's getting her first dragon, Hiccup, of course she's excited," Astrid replied gently as she ran a brush through her blonde locks. "Besides-" she added with a grin, "-at least she let us sleep in past sunrise this time."

"I guess that's a bonus," Hiccup chuckled, quickly pulling his vest on. "Of course, I would have liked to sleep in for a little longer!" he exclaimed loudly in the direction of the closed door.

Hiccup and Astrid laughed when they heard a raspberry being blown from outside the door. "You can sleep in tomorrow, daddy! Now hurry up!"

"Alright, alright, we're coming!" Hiccup laughed, as beside him,

Astrid's shoulders were shaking with silent laughter. "You know what?" Hiccup asked with a glance towards his wife, "-she's \_your \_daughter. She acts nothing like me! "

"Being annoying isn't like you?" Astrid asked him teasingly, resulting with a pillow to the face by her innocent looking husband. "Oh, real mature." she said with a roll of her eyes. "Now I know she's \_your \_daughter."

"Mummmmm! "

"We're coming!" Astrid called back quickly, before she turned to Hiccup with a grin. "We better get a move on before she bursts with excitement."

"I think we're already past that," Hiccup chuckled, as he and Astrid opened the door to Siri, trying hopelessly to get a shirt over the top of her little sister's head, all the while trying to stop herself from jumping up and down with excitement.

"What in Thor's name are you doing, Seer?" Astrid asked her eldest daughter in amusement as she took in her little girl's discomfort at being dressed by her hyperactive big sister. "She'll never get dressed at this rate!"

"I just wanted to save you time," Siri admitted sheepishly. "Is it really that bad?" she asked with a glance at her sister, whose arms were pinned uncomfortably to her side by her bright yellow shirt.

"Unless you were going for that look, then no," Astrid chuckled, as she placed an arm around the toddler's shoulders, before leading her back to her room. "But I think on the safe side, I'll do this. You and dad can wake up Leif."

"I'm awake!" Leif's voice came from behind his closed door. "Siri is loud."

"I have to be to wake you up," Siri scoffed as she opened the door to his room. "Come on," she whined, "I want to get going!"

"I'm coming, I'm coming," her brother answered as he grabbed his vest. Rushing for the door, though, he tripped over what appeared to be a green lump by his feet.

"Ow!" he exclaimed in irritation, "Mossy!"

What had first appeared to be a green lump at Leif's feet turned out to be a small olive green Terrible Terror whose colour seemed to give its name. Slowly raising its head to his young trainer, the tiny dragon lazily blinked one eye after the other, with an accusatory glance that screamed 'what did I do?', not bothered in the least that he had been tripped over just moments before, before returning to the state of slumber he had so rudely been awakened from.

"You're just going to sleep?" Leif asked the little dragon incredulously as Siri roared with laughter beside him. Turning to his sister, he gestured to the slumbering dragon by his feet, disbelief evident in his features. "Why did I choose him?" he asked her.

"Because he jumped on your head and you thought he was cool."

Leif frowned in annoyance at her. "He was cool," Leif protested. "But now he just sits there like...like-"

"Like moss on a rock?" Siri suggested for him, flicking her eyes towards the little dragon. "Well, maybe he's taking his name seriously," she added with a snort. "Maybe you should have given him a different name!"

"Can I switch dragons?" Leif asked hopefully. "I can have Midnight...?"

"There will be no switching dragons of any kind around here, buddy," Hiccup interjected sternly from the doorway, causing the six year old to jump and wheel around; a sheepish look beginning to form on his face. "Besides-" Hiccup went on as he entered the room with a quick glance towards the dozing dragon, "-Midnight is Siri's dragon and no one else's-"

"But Siri is getting a new one," Leif pointed out. "Why can't I-?"

"Midnight will still be mine after today," Siri said irritably, cutting off her brother's question. "I'm not giving her to you just because I have a new dragon. Daddy would never give up Toothless just because he got a new dragon."

"Well said, sweetie," Hiccup said with a smile in her direction. Turning to his son, though, his expression changed to one of seriousness. "Leif," Hiccup said gently as he bent down in front of the young boy, "we don't switch dragons just because we're annoyed with them-"

"But-"

"No buts," Hiccup cut in firmly, placing his hands on the young boy's shoulders, green eyes meeting on green. "You chose Mossy because you thought he was cool and you've been caring for him for a year. Sure, he's lazy," Hiccup admitted with a chuckle as he looked over at the dragon in question, "but that's the point of having a terror. You learn to look after a dragon and care for them before you move to a rideable one. Maybe if you spent more time with him, he wouldn't be so lazy now, would he?"

"I guess so," Leif said slowly as he looked into his dad's eyes. "But," he looked over towards his dragon; who was looking at his friend with one eye open, "how can I stop him being lazy? He's the laziest dragon on Berk!"

"That's stretching it!" Siri snorted from the corner.

"She's right," Hiccup agreed with grin. "I mean, have you seen Toothless most days? Heck-" he looked over at Siri, "-have you seen Midnight some days? Buddy, if we gave up on our dragons every time they were lazy, no one would have one. Especially Gobber!"

Leif giggled. "Even Mossy isn't that lazy!" he said, knowing his father was speaking of Grump, who fell asleep anywhere, even while

flying.

"See?" Hiccup said with a smile towards his son. "Now, I don't want to hear anymore about you switching dragons, alright?" he asked his son sternly, "-I don't want to find out off Siri that you've stolen Midnight off her."

"He wouldn't be getting her anyway," Siri said with a giggle. "She'd just ignore him!"

Giggling at both comments, Leif nodded seriously at his father, a small smile forming on his face. "Yes, daddy."

"Good boy," Hiccup smiled, giving his son a kiss on the forehead. "Now," he said with a groan, as he heaved himself up, "we better get going. Siri has a dragon to choose."

"Are you sure?" Astrid's amused voice came from the doorway, making everyone turn to her with a start. She chuckled. "I was starting to wonder if you'd changed your mind you've been so long" she told Siri with a grin.

"I haven't changed my mind!" Siri exclaimed, aghast as she looked over at her mother, and sister (now dressed comfortably in her mother's arms). "We had to stop Leif from stealing Midnight from me!"

"I heard," Astrid said with a glance towards her son, who grinned sheepishly at her. Shaking her head with a laugh, though, she turned her attention back to Siri. "Len's here." she told her. "He was wondering where you were."

"Oh!" Siri exclaimed. "Is he downstairs?"

"He's waiting outside," Astrid replied. "So, are you ready to pick your dragon?" she asked her daughter proudly.

"Dwagon, dwagon!" Ingrid echoed happily from her mother's arms. "Siwi pick dwagon!"

"That's right, Ingrid," Siri replied with a smile towards her little sister, beaming widely. "Are you going to see some dragons?"

"See dwagons!" the little girl replied giddily, as she reached out towards Siri, but was held back by her mother.

"Wait until we get outside, sweetie?" Astrid told the toddler, who whined a little, but didn't protest.

"Don't worry, Ingrid, you and Leif will see them," Siri assured her sister with a wide smile. "Come on Midnight," she quickly said to the dragon, loitering outside the doorway, who quickly followed her without delay. Inside the room, though, Mossy just gave the family a few blinks, before curling up to sleep again. Leif shook his head, but quickly followed his family out the door, before stopping dead as he realised they were one member short.

"Where's Toothless?" he asked, bewildered, as he looked around the house.

"He left early to gather the dragons together," Hiccup explained to him as they headed down the stairs. "He and Cloudjumper will meet us in the forest."

Leif's brows furrowed in confusion. "Which dragons?" the boy asked.

"The dragons without riders," Hiccup explained to his son. "Toothless is gathering them together just outside the forest so your sister can choose one."

"Why aren't we going to the dragon academy?" Siri asked with a frown. "That's where I got Midnight."

"Yeah, and Midnight's not the size of a house," Hiccup chuckled as he glanced down at the Terror in question. "The academy wouldn't hold all the dragons without riders, so the forest was the next best thing we could do."

Siri bobbed up and down in anticipation. "Oh, this is going to be awesome!" she squealed as she wrenched open the front door, only to run into Lennart who had been standing just behind it.

"Oh, I'm so sorry Len!" Siri exclaimed apologetically as Lennart heaved himself off the ground, rubbing his nose. "I didn't think you'd be so close to the door!"

"I wasn't until just then," the eleven year old answered, rubbing his nose. "I was going to knock to find out what you were doing." He frowned suddenly. "What were you doing?" he asked with a grin, his nose all but forgotten, "-I thought you would have been barging into my house by now you were so excited last night."

"I would have if I didn't have to stop somebody," Siri glanced towards her brother, who grinned innocently back at her, "from trying to steal my dragon off me, all because his is lazy."

Lennart glanced towards the younger boy in amusement. "You thought that would work?" he asked.

"Not really," Leif answered with a grin, "but I tried!"

"And you won't be trying again," Hiccup cut in firmly. "If I find out you're trying to switch dragons again, you won't be getting your own rideable one. Ever" he added with a glance towards his son, who gave him a nod.

"Speaking of rideable dragons," Snotlout cut in as they started heading towards the forest, "what are you hoping to get, Seer? Surely you have something in mind?"

"I don't know," Siri answered as she skipped along the path. "As long as I get one, I'm happy with any dragon!"

"Are you skipping?" Lennart asked in amusement as he watched his friend skip ahead of him. "I never thought of you as a skipper." Stopping in front of him, though, Siri spun around and stuck out her tongue towards the eleven year old with a giggle.

"I'm getting my dragon today, I can't help it!"

"I don't think I've ever known a person to skip in excitement over a dragon,\_" Snotlout remarked with a laugh.

"Oh, I don't know, I'm pretty sure that's what Hiccup was doing when he was given the dragon academy," Astrid said, a teasing tone to her voice as she glanced over at Hiccup, who looked back at her incredulously.

"I wasn't skipping!" he exclaimed quickly, "-I was...jumping with excitement," he mumbled.

"I'm pretty sure hopping with one foot to the other while walking is classed as skipping," Astrid teased, much to Hiccup's chagrin as everyone erupted with laughter around them. "Which is what you were doing," she insisted with a wide grin.

"Oh really?" Hiccup asked with an answering grin, "-because I thought for sure you did the same thing when I kissed \_you \_for the first time."

"That...that was not skipping!" Astrid spluttered, as her daughter and the rest of their friends hooted with hilarity behind them. "I was only...humph..!" Astrid was suddenly cut off as Hiccup's lips met her own, effectively cutting off the rest of her comment, causing a new round of laughter to emit from behind them; from the adults anyway.

"Ew, gross," Siri said in disgust as she watched the scene in front of her. "Do you guys have to do that?"

"Not really," Astrid answered with a grin towards her daughter, "but if it embarrasses you, it keeps us entertained."

"Gee, thanks," Siri replied dryly, to the delight of Leif and Lennart who both snorted behind their hands. "Can we just go and get my dragon now?" she asked them impatiently.

"We were just joking, sweetie," Hiccup chuckled, leaning down so he could kiss his daughter's forehead, "but yeah we're almost there."

"Have you had a dragon in mind at least, Seer?" Anna asked, as she came into step beside the young girl. Looking up at Anna, though, Siri shrugged with a laugh.

"I like the common dragons," Siri admitted with a small smile. "You know," she added quickly, seeing her friend's confused expression, "Nadders, Gronkles and Nightmares. Although I would love to have a Storm Cutter" she added thoughtfully.

"I know you would, sweetie," Hiccup answered gently, "but you know Cloud jumper's breed is fairly uncommon around here."

Siri sighed. "Yeah, I know," she said, before her eyes suddenly lit up as they approached the outskirts of the forest. "There's Toothless!" she screeched excitedly as she spotted the Night Fury within the trees, as well as \_a lot\_ of other dragons, which made Siri's eyes widen in astonishment. "That's a lot of dragons," she said slowly as she swept her eyes from one breed of dragon to the



other.

"This is going to be so cool!" Lennart exclaimed as he looked around at all the assembled dragons. "I can't wait until it's my turn!"

"It's only five more months, Len," Anna reminded him kindly, as she struggled to keep a strong grip on her two year old, who spotting the dragons, was trying to get down. Beside her, Astrid was having the same struggle with Ingrid, whose green eyes were as wide as saucers with all the dragons in one place.

"There you are!" Valka's voice came from behind the trees. "I thought you'd forgotten!" Coming out from the thick of the trees, Valka grinned at her granddaughter when she saw her bouncing up and down on the spot. "You look like you have a dragon in your pants." she noted with a giggle.

"Aren't you supposed to say ants?" Lennart asked the dragon woman shyly, who grinned with a shrug.

"Eh...dragons' funnier," Valka answered with a grin. "More relevant as well I think. I've seen many a Terrible Terror try it."

"Remind me to stay away from the boy's dragons," Snotlout muttered to Anna, who bit back a laugh.

"Can I go pick my dragon now?" Siri asked, having not heard the conversation behind her.

"Wait until Toothless comes to get you, dear," Valka said gently, as she looked back to where Toothless and Cloudjumper were arranging the other dragons. "I think he's making sure none of them do any funny business, like try to fire at you or something," Valka chuckled, as she watched the Night Fury growl at a Monstrous Nightmare who looked over in Siri's direction.

"He looks pretty protective," Hiccup noted with a laugh. "Both of them," he added as he saw Cloud jumper add his growls. Having heard his friend's voice though, Toothless soon rushed over to his rider and gave him a nudge to the stomach, making Hiccup smile back as he stroked the dragons head.

"Hey bud," he smiled warmly to the dragon. "You ready for Siri?" He looked over at his daughter, who was almost ready to burst with excitement as she looked over at the dragons. Hiccup laughed. "I think she's about ready to burst, bud, you better take her over."

Toothless turned to Siri and gave her a gummy smile, which she returned cheerfully before following the black dragon through the trees, where she was met by Fishlegs and Gobber, who were all standing back watching.

The clearing in which they were standing was thrumming with dragons. The larger and the dragons more common on Berk â€" Gronkles, Monstrous Nightmares, Deadly Nadders and Zippelbacks â€" were crowded around the outside of the clearing, all facing towards the young Viking. Bristling just behind them in the trees were some less common dragons â€" Timberjacks and a few Thunderdrums, with fleeting glances

of a Rumblehorn through the trees. Many were relaxing, sitting or lying on the ground, while others jostled or roosted in trees.

This was going to be a difficult choice Siri noted with a pang.

"How am I supposed to choose one?!" Siri exclaimed incredulously, looking around the crowded clearing, where many of the dragons were running around playfully. "There are so many!"

"You don't pick the dragon, sweetie," Hiccup said gently, meeting his daughter's eyes with a small smile. "The dragon will pick you."

"How will I know that the dragon chooses me, though?" Siri asked nervously, flicking her eyes back to the variety of dragons around her. "How do I know they're not just curious?" she added with a frown as she turned her gaze back to her parents.

"You'll know, Seer," Hiccup told her reassuringly. "A bonded dragon won't just give you a passing glance or sniff; they'll really show interest-"

"In other words, they'll stay with you longer than it takes to figure out who you are," Astrid cut in, seeing her daughter's confused expression. "See Stormfly?" the Viking warrior asked her eldest daughter, nodding her head towards the Nadder, playfully nudging up against Astrid's back. With a laugh, she reached up to stroke the dragon's nose, before flicking her eyes back to the twelve year old. "Stormfly tries to get my attention," Astrid explained with a smile, "and is very playful around me. She doesn't just want to know what I'm up too. That's how you know a dragon is for you."

"So..." Siri said slowly, "- a connection?"

"Precisely," Hiccup agreed with a smile. "And believe me; you'll know when a connection is made." With a warm smile, he turned his head towards Toothless, who looked back at his friend with a gummy smile of his own, before he turned his attention back to the other dragons. Siri followed his line of sight with an excited jump of her stomach. Noticing their daughter's anticipation, Hiccup and Astrid both faced their daughter with identical smiles upon their faces.

"Alright, Seer, don't go too far and make sure you don't," Hiccup emphasised firmly, "wander off without Toothless. Remember, these dragons are still wild and there's no telling what they'll do."

"Just walk around the clearing, and approach different dragons," Astrid added quickly as Siri went to wander off. "If they take off, don't chase them. Wait until they come to you or show interest, okay?"

"Okay," Siri replied with a nod. Turning to Lennart and Toothless with a grin, she quickly waved them over. "Come on, then!," she exclaimed impatiently, "I want to find my dragon today you know!"

"I'm coming!" Lennart exclaimed as he took off after his friend and Toothless as they walked through the wooded clearing. A few dragons watched them curiously as they walked past, but none of them seemed worried, with a few dragons walking forward cautiously as Siri came

over to them.

"She's a natural with them," Fishlegs noted with interest as he watched Siri's interaction with a few dragons nearby. "They seem to trust her."

"Well, I hope they do, or else the 8 years of dragon lessons have been for nothing," Astrid said in amusement, as she struggled to keep hold of her two year old daughter, trying to escape from her arms. "Ah uh, sweetie," she told the toddler firmly, as she tightened her grip, "I can't let you near the dragons."

"She can play with Meatlug if she wants," Fishlegs suggested as he watched the toddler squirm in Astrid's arms. "She's very patient and she won't let her wonder off."

"Thanks, Fishlegs," Hiccup said gratefully, as he reached out to take hold of his youngest daughter. "Come here, baby," he said softly, before he gently lowered her in front of the Gronkle, who sniffed cautiously at the little human, before happily nudging her tiny frame, resulting in a high pitch giggle from the little girl as she reached up to stroke the dragon's scales.

"Good dwagon!" she giggled, stroking the dragon more gently than any regular two year old usually would, causing more than a few surprised glances in the girl's direction.

"Is it just me or is she a natural already?" Snotlout asked the group in astonishment, as the toddler continued to stroke Meatlug's scales. "I don't remember Siri or any of my boys being that gentle at that age."

"Or my kids," Fishlegs added in surprise, as he turned to Valka and Hiccup. "Is she a mix of both of you two, or...?"

"She's got this gentleness about her that we can't really explain," Astrid answered, before anyone could answer. "As well as a very thoughtful and quiet nature," Astrid added with a slight laugh. "And she certainly didn't get it from me!"

"Sounds like Val to me," Anna cut in with a smile.

"Another dragon lady in the village, huh?" Gobber grinned, with a glance towards the older woman, who rolled her eyes.

"Don't you start," she said with a chuckle.

"Daddy," Leif interrupted the adults with a sigh, "can I go help Siri? This is boring."

"Alright," Hiccup agreed cautiously, with a quick glance to where the other kids were, "just make sure you stick with Toothless."

With a relieved nod, the six year old quickly ran off in his sister's direction, who was now stroking a large Monstrous Nightmare which made Astrid's stomach clench nervously, despite Toothless's presence. Biting her lip, she turned to Hiccup with a worried glance.

"Urgh...should one of us be over there with her...maybe?" she

suggested anxiously as she continued to watch her daughter with the Monstrous Nightmare. "You know...in case she needs extra help?" she hurriedly added, seeing Hiccup's amused glance being thrown in her direction.

"And here I thought\_ I'd\_ be the worried one," Hiccup teased, resulting in an unamused glare from his wife. He coughed awkwardly. "Do...do you want me to go over there?" he asked her.

"Please," she replied with a sheepish smile. "I know it's usually you that gets all protective, but it's just...that dragon is really big, and-"

"You're just being a mother," Hiccup finished for her. Smiling warmly, Hiccup leant forward and placed a kiss on her forehead. "I'll go over," he said quietly. "You just make sure little miss curious over there doesn't wander off." He gestured to Ingrid, still happily playing with Meatlug behind them. Following his line of sight, Astrid chuckled.

"I'll do my best."

Shaking his head, Hiccup quickly rushed over to his daughter, just as the Monstrous Nightmare she had been patting grew disinterested and trotted off, without a second glance. Undeterred, Siri gave a slight shrug before turning towards the opposite direction.

"Too bad," Hiccup said as he approached her, eyes still on the dragon still slinking out of sight, "I thought you had that one. He seemed pretty curious."

"Yeah, but he was \_huge,\_" Siri replied with a quick glance in the same direction. "I'm tall, but even I wouldn't be able to get on him." She glanced back to her father, eyebrows furrowed. "Why are you over here?" she asked suspiciously, a grin forming on her lips. "Were you worried about that dragon?"

"For once it wasn't me," Hiccup responded, throwing up his hands in protest. "Believe it or not, it was your mother with the protective side this time."

"If it's not you, it's mum, huh?" Siri asked with a grin. "I guess I'll know if I have the right dragon now anyway."

"You don't need me to tell you that, Seer and you know it," Hiccup said as he glanced around; just spotting an olive coloured Gronkle edging over to them, sniffing curiously at the small group. Gesturing silently to his daughter, Hiccup wrapped an arm around her shoulders before carefully guiding her over to the inquisitive dragon, where she extended her arm cautiously. Looking on excitedly, Leif and Lennart just watched as the dragon warily poked his snout into her outstretched hand, letting her pat it, before it closed its eyes; a sure sign it was comfortable with her.

"This is cool," Leif said in awe, as he watched his sister stroke the dragon's snout. "I can't wait until I get \_my\_ rideable dragon."

"You still have another six years yet, buddy," Hiccup answered, not taking his eyes off the girl and Gronkle. "What about you, though

Len?" he asked the older boy, barely glancing in his direction. "You'll be doing this in five months. What are you hoping for?"

"I wouldn't mind getting a Monstrous Nightmare," Lennart replied. "Of course I wouldn't treat him the way dad does." he added with a laugh.

"Good to know," Hiccup chuckled, with a quick glance in the eleven year olds direction. "I think your dad missed the memo on how to handle a dragon, and he's still trying to figure it out until this day."

"Mum says that all the time," Lennart said with a small smile, "but I sometimes think Hookfang just likes torturing him."

Hiccup chuckled. "Yeah, it wouldn't surprise me." He turned back to watch his daughter, only to find the Gronkle suddenly lose interest in her human companion, and begin to saunter off in another direction. Siri's shoulders slumped a little, but she soon shrugged and turned to face her father with a small smile.

"I guess she wasn't meant for me after all."

"I think she liked you," Hiccup told his daughter gently, patting her shoulder, "but she was too young. I think she was only around ten or so. You would have been the mature one in that friendship."

"Well... I didn't really want a Gronkle anyway," Siri admitted guiltily. "They're too...wimpy," she finished a little lamely, causing Hiccup to raise his eyebrows. "That's not what I meant," Siri protested hurriedly, seeing her father's expression. "It's just that I was hoping for something a bit more...warrior like. Meatlug is just fine for Uncle Fishlegs, but he's not going to be Chief one day-"

"Enough said, Seer," Hiccup interjected quickly. "You want something a bit tougher in other words."

"Yeah," Siri admitted with a nod as she began to walk off again. "You know?" she asked, "one that will help me with chiefly duties and all when I'm older. Of course no dragon will be as good as Toothless," she added with a grin in Toothless's direction, who returned it with a lick to her face.

"Eww, Toothless!" Siri giggled, as she wiped the saliva from her face. "I didn't ask for a bath you know!"

"That's what you get for telling him he's awesome," Hiccup quipped.

"I didn't tell him he was awesome, though! Not exactly anyway-" Suddenly stopping dead in her tracks, the twelve year old gave a frown as she felt a pair of eyes on her back. Her stomach gave a lurch. "Is it just me?," Siri asked slowly as everyone turned curiously towards her, "-or is someone following us?"

Hiccup frowned slightly. "What do you mean following us?" Turning around, Hiccup's eyes widened in surprise. "Ohhh..."

"What?" the kids echoed nervously. None of them moved from their

spots.

"Well, someone's following us alright," Hiccup amused voice came from behind, "but I wouldn't call them a threat."

Frowning curiously, the three kids quickly turned around, only to find themselves face to face with a very curious violet coloured Nadder, who was looking at Siri with such a look of intense curiosity that she seemed to be studying the young girl.

"Well, hello," Siri giggled as she approached the inquisitive Nadder. "Have you been following us this whole time?" Reaching up to pat the dragon, her heart skipped a beat as it immediately leant into the girl's touch, without even hesitating.

"Amazing," Hiccup said in awe as he watched the dragon's actions. "I've never seen a dragon so comfortable with a human that quickly before. Even Toothless took a few days to let me touch him."

"I think she really likes me." Stopping mid sentence, though, Siri looked over at her father with an uncertain expression. "Urgh," she said awkwardly, "it is a girl, right? Because I've never been good at checking this in dragons..."

"Yes, it's a girl, sweetie," Hiccup laughed, watching his daughter's face turn to one of relief. "And from the looks of her..." Hiccup circled the violet Nadder thoughtfully, "...she's not much older than you. I'd say...around 14 or so. Quite good for you."

"How do you know it's a girl?" Lennart asked, his brows furrowed.

"Do you really want me to get into that?" Siri asked him, amused, before Hiccup could answer. Hearing this comment, though, Hiccup coughed awkwardly making Lennart turn a brilliant shade of magenta.

"I don't need that lesson, Seer!" Lennart stuttered; a look of mortification growing across his face. "I just thought it was different for dragons is all."

"How different?" Leif asked innocently, flicking his eyes from his sister's embarrassed friend to his father, torn between embarrassment and laughter. Hearing his son's question, though, all traces of laughter vanished from his eyes as he coughed awkwardly.

"That's not something you need to know just now, buddy," he told his son uncomfortably, before he quickly turned his attention back to the matter at hand.

"So...what do you think, Seer?" he asked the twelve year old, whose attention was still sorely on the purple dragon in front of her. "Do you think she's the one?"

Siri emitted a high giggle as the Nadder nuzzled her face gently, resulting in it making a contented squawk of its own at the sound of her new friend's giggle. Reaching up to stroke her muzzle, Siri smiled widely as the dragon continued to hang around.

"I think so," Siri answered her father, looking over at him with a

joyful smile that lit up her bright azure eyes. "She seems to like me, but I don't know if it's just curiosity or not."

"That's easy to check," Hiccup said. "Why don't you slowly wander off and see if she continues to follow you? If so, she obviously wants to be your dragon."

Nodding silently, Siri slowly pulled her arm away from the dragon, before gesturing Lennart and Leif to follow her as she slowly began to walk away, straining her ears slightly in an effort to hear the sounds of dragon footfalls behind her.

She didn't hear them.

Crestfallen, Siri quickly turned around to find the Nadder where she had left her; its head cocked to one side as if confused, but it didn't show any signs of following her.

"She's not following." Looking back towards the dragon, Siri heaved a loud sigh. "I \_really \_thought she was the one this time."

"I wouldn't give up just yet, Seer," Hiccup said quickly, noticing the dragon's cocked head. "I've seen that look on Stormfly many times when your mother can't play or fly with her. She's probably just confused on why you've walked off. Just give her a minute."

Sure enough; no sooner had Hiccup suggested this, the dragon, still looking over at them in bewilderment suddenly bounded over to them, immediately nuzzling the girl's blonde hair, making Siri squeal in excitement, despite herself. It was official. This was the one.

"This is the one, daddy!" Siri squealed delightedly, as she continued to stroke the dragon's nose. "I've found my dragon!" Smiling up at the dragon, Siri's face broke into a grin. "Do you want to be my dragon?" she asked the Nadder, who gave a small squawk of approval at the question.

"Well, it's official; you're just like your mother," Hiccup laughed, as he watched his daughter with her new Nadder. "Except, the colour is different to Stormfly, of course." he added, noting the dark purple tone to the dragon's scales, complete with red markings to her face that would certainly make it easy to spot her in a dragon race.

"Yeah, what is it with you and purple?" Lennart teased, looking the dragon up and down. "Midnight is purple, and now this one is! You'd think it was your favourite colour or something."

"That'd be blue, but close enough," Siri grinned at him. "But it's not my fault that every purple dragon seems to like me." Casting her gaze back over her new dragon, though, Siri suddenly frowned thoughtfully. "Actually, do you know what her colour reminds me of?" she asked Lennart, suddenly turning her attention back to him.

Lennart frowned. "No," he answered, puzzled, before realisation flickered in his sky blue eyes. "Ohhh-" he said, "-yesterdays' sunset, yeah."

"Sunset?" Hiccup narrowed his eyes suspiciously at the two pre-teens. "What were two doing watching a sunset together? Or more importantly-" he added with a flicker between the two of them, "-when?"

Siri rolled her eyes. "Try last night when Len was about to go home. Remember?" she asked her father. "You were there." With a shake of her head, the girl laughed. "Seriously dad, stop worrying! Len and I do not like each other that way."

"Don't like each-" Lennart started, bewildered, before his eyes suddenly widened in realisation of what she meant. "Oh, gross!" the boy exclaimed in disgust, looking up at his chief with wide eyes. "Why would you even think that?!"

"Because you're almost teenagers and I dread the day \_that \_will come." Hiccup mumbled.

"Well, that day isn't today," Siri said with a shudder. "Anyway," she continued, with a glance back to Lennart, "I think I might have a name for my new friend here."

"What, sunset?" Lennart snorted, all remnants of the previous conversation gone from his mind. "A little girly for you isn't it?"

"No!" Siri shook her head in annoyance. "And not dawn either," she added, seeing her brother opening his mouth to say something. "I want something stronger than that and since the sunset yesterday was all cool and purple because of the storm coming in, I have a perfect name for her." She nodded to the Nadder, who seemed to be listening intently.

"And what's that?" Hiccup asked her curiously, making Siri grin in anticipation.

"Night Star."

"That," Lennart said, grinning, "is awesome! But," he glanced towards the Nadder with a furrowed brows, "why Night \_Star\_? Wouldn't Night \_Storm\_ make more sense? If you're basing it on yesterdays sunset anyway" he added quickly seeing Siri's bewildered look towards him. Hearing this, though, a look of understanding crossed her face and she chuckled.

"Not every purple sunset leads to a storm does it?" she asked logically. "Besides," she added with a shrug, "I saw a few stars in that sky last night, more than lightning anyway."

"Fair enough." Lennart agreed with a smile.

"Well," Siri said with a cheerful glance up at her new dragon, "what do you think?" she asked the dragon. "Do you like the name Night Star?"

A quick playful nudge to the twelve year olds head soon answered that, and Siri laughed and giving her new dragon a warm hug around the neck, she glanced towards her father and Toothless, who was looking up at the dragon warily. After a few tense moments, Toothless emitted a low coo of acceptance towards the Deadly Nadder who gave



her alpha a low rumble of gratitude back at the acceptance.

"Don't pretend you didn't like her, bud," Hiccup said with a grin towards the Night Fury as they began walking back to the rest of the group. "You're the one who didn't even flinch when she was following us. Don't deny it, buddy" Hiccup added as Toothless gave him a sideways glance, "you both knew she was there and did nothing."

With sheepish grins, Toothless and Cloudjumper quickly rushed ahead, leading to a chorus of giggles to emit from Hiccup and the kids.

"I thought it was strange Toothless didn't seem to notice we were being followed," Siri laughed, looking after the dragons retreating backs. "He must not have seen her as a threat."

"Obviously not," Hiccup agreed, wrapping an arm around his daughter's shoulders, "which means that you have found the perfect dragon if even Toothless approves."

"That'd be a first," Siri said, "-he still doesn't like Midnight after all these years!"

"I think that's because he isn't a fan of terrors more than anything," Hiccup smiled, as they came in earshot of the rest of the waiting group, where Leif suddenly broke away from the little group, hopping up and down in excitement as he pointed towards the Nadder, following her new friend affectionately from behind her.

"Siri chose her dragon!" he shouted wildly, pointing excitedly towards the dragon. "Siri chose her dragon!"

"We can see that, buddy," Astrid said, amused, as the group approached them. Looking towards her daughter, Astrid gave her a proud smile. "A Nadder, huh?" she asked, with a glance towards the dragon. "She's beautiful." Reaching up to stroke the dragon's scales gently. "What's her name?"

"Night Star," Siri answered proudly, as she watched her dragon become immediately become comfortable with her mother. "And yeah, I know-" she added with a grin, as her mother looked at her questioningly, "-I seem to have a thing for purple."

"I wasn't going to say a word," Astrid grinned, as Ingrid suddenly appeared beside her older sister; emerald green eyes wide with curiosity as she looked up at the dragon.

"Siwi pick dwagon!" she exclaimed cheerfully, as she reached up for the dragon. "Me pat!"

"I got you, Ingrid!" Placing his arms around his sister's middle, Leif groaned as he tried, unsuccessfully, to heave his sister up to see the dragon properly.

"Don't hurt yourself, Leif," Siri cut in, as Leif plopped his younger sister back on the ground with a grunt. "I've got her."

Picking her sister up with much greater ease, Siri lifted her to eye level with the Deadly Nadder, who gave the toddler a gentle lick on the cheek, causing her emit a round of giggles, as she carefully pat the dragon's snout.

"That didn't take as long as I thought," Astrid whispered quietly to her husband, keeping her eyes locked on the three children for a moment before glancing towards Hiccup warmly. "Thanks for helping her."

"It was all her, Astrid, I had nothing to do with it," Hiccup answered her with a small smile, before pressing his lips against Astrid's golden locks, as Siri, her arms shaking with effort of holding up her sister, set her back on the ground with a slight grunt.

"Bit heavy there is she, Seer?" Hiccup asked her.

"Just a bit," Siri replied, rubbing her arm. "Especially when I had to hold her up so high. Night Star is pretty tall in that case."

Well, I have to admit, Seer, she's a beauty," Gobber interjected, looking the dragon up and down, impressed. "I had a feeling you'd get a Nadder."

"How?" Siri asked him, brows furrowing, making Gobber grin a toothy grin towards the young girl.

"The fact that you are so much like your mum didn't even give you a hint?"

Siri's face fell. "I'm not mum, though," she argued, hesitantly. "Why does everyone compare me with her?-"

"We're just kidding, baby," her father assured her, with a kiss to her blonde locks, "don't take it so seriously. We know you're not mum."

"Although there are similarities," Gobber mumbled, earning him a glare from his young Chief. "What?" he said with a shrug, "it's true."

"But if you're having second thoughts on having your beautiful Nadder because you think you're like your mum," Valka teased, effectively defusing the situation as Siri went to protest back, "I guess you can't get your present."

Siri's eyes widened. "Present?" she asked, excitedly, looking from her parents to her grandmother with interest. "What present?" she asked again, all signs of the earlier argument erased from her mind.

Hiccup and Astrid exchanged a mischievous glance that made Siri's heart leap with excitement.

"In honour of you getting your first dragon," Valka said, reaching her hand behind a tree, "your father made you something to get you started." Siri's eyes widened as the object came into view, and she gasped, her heart thumping in her ears, as her eyes fell upon the item for the first time.

It was a saddle; but not any ordinary saddle. Made from the softest of pale brown tanned yak leather, there where whorls and swirls

embroidered around the edge of the seat, a yew figurehead of a dragon poking up from the leading point of the seat, and various hooks, strap points and pockets adorning the read end of the seat - which had been made with the knowledge that Siri was still young, and had ample room for her to grow into the seat, as well as the fact it could have been placed upon the back of any species of dragon. Trailing from the back ridge of the seat, above the pockets and tie points, were three streamers; two purple and one white, and just in front of this where they were attached to the saddle was Siri's name, scorched into the leather, so that it would never fade or wear out.

"I made it a few months ago," Hiccup said nervously, watching as Siri's hand trailed over the intricate details of the saddle mutely. "I tried to make sure it would fit any dragon you chose, as well as fitting you as you kept growing, but if you don't like it, I can easily change it-"

"I love it," Siri whispered.

Hiccup frowned, not catching what she'd said. "What?" he asked her.

"I love it!" Siri screamed again, a little louder, her voice filled with exhilaration. "I love it, I love it, I love it!" She raced over to her father and fling her arms around his waist, hugging him so tightly, he felt as if his ribs might break. "Thank you daddy!" Letting go of him, she beamed. "It's perfect!"

"You're welcome, baby," Hiccup said, a little emotionally as stroked his daughter's cheek warmly, with a tender smile. "I just thought that I had to give you something special for the day you've been looking forward to for a long time. A really long time." he added with a laugh, remembering her toddler days when all she'd wanted was a dragon of her own.

"Thankyou," Siri repeated joyfully, kissing her father's cheek, before she engulfed her mother as well, who was taken aback, but gladly embraced her eldest daughter lovingly. "Thank you both of you!" she repeated again, giddily, before she quickly grabbed the saddle and raced over to her new friend. "I'm going to try it out right now!"

"Hold up!" Hiccup exclaimed hurriedly, quickly grabbing a hold of her shoulder. "As much as I can't wait to see you on a dragon for the first time, you can't just yet."

"Why not?" the twelve year old asked, disappointedly.

"You can't just get on a dragon, sweetie," Astrid told her with a sigh. "We can put the saddle on, but you need a lesson in flying without falling off before you can fly on your own first."

Siri raised her eyebrows incredulously. "Are you serious?" she asked, disbelievingly. "I've been on Toothless and Stormfly loads of times!"

"I wish we were"- Valka said, apologetic look towards her eldest grandchild, "-but rules are rules."

"You're not kidding?" Groaning loudly, Siri pulled the saddle away from her dragon, who herself looked disappointed that they couldn't go for a fly. "This sucks."

"Welcome to dragon training, dear," Valka said with a slight chuckle towards the young girl. "But once you have your first lesson tomorrow, you can fly solo."

"Tomorrow?" Siri asked, eyes bright. "Yes!" Looking back to her dragon again, though, she sighed once more. "It still sucks, though."

"Yeah, it does," Lennart agreed with a frown. "I wanted to go for a fly too."

"No, you wouldn't be, Len," Hiccup told him awkwardly. "Not until you have your own."

"Oh man," Lennart whined.

"I know, but we have these rules for a reason," Hiccup told him and his daughter with a small smile, who returned it, albeit half heartedly. "Dragon training isn't just for the fun of it. It's to make sure that you and your dragon can bond in the best way possible and to help the dragon too."

"Glad you think so," Snotlout scoffed, gesturing towards Hookfang behind him, "this one has never seemed to respond." Hearing his human's voice, Hookfang looked up from playing with the two youngest Jorgenson boys, and gave his friend an annoyed look.

"Wish I could train Mossy like this," Leif said in a huff, "I can't get him to do\_ anything\_!"

"Your Terrible Terror, Mossy?" Valka asked her grandson, surprised. "Why didn't you tell me? I can help you with him if you want?"

Leif looked at his grandmother in disbelief. "Why didn't you tell me before?!" he exclaimed, throwing his hands up dramatically for a six year old.

Valka shrugged. "You never asked."

Peals of laughter rang around the group as Leif opened and closed his mouth like a fish as he processed this answer, before he just sighed and plopped himself onto the ground in defeat.

"Hey Val?" Snotlout snorted, "you think you could me with this one?" He pointed to Hookfang again who glanced back in irritation. "You'd think after 20 years, he'd actually listen to me now, but no," he drawled, "he's just gotten worse!"

"Well maybe if you were nicer to him, he wouldn't be." Anna told her husband with a sigh.

"He's pig headed, An!" he exclaimed with a glance towards her, not noticing the Monstrous Nightmare coming up sneakily behind him, "he doesn't listen to anyone!"

"Umâ€¦Snotlout?" Hiccup said hesitantly, keeping his eyes on the sly

dragon.

"Well, he doesn't listen to me anyway," Snotlout continued, not noticing everyone's nervous looks towards him. "But-" Snotlout suddenly stopped, and looking around everyone's sheepish looks, he suddenly felt his bottom burning hot, and his face fell.

"Ow, ow, ow, hot, hot, hot!" he screamed, as he ran towards the only water trough available and flung himself in it. Breathing a sigh of relief as the water put his burning pants out, everyone around him, especially the kids, were all howling with uncontrolled laughter; his own kids the loudest among them.

"And this, Seer, is the reason we have dragon training," Astrid said with a shake of her head, as she, Siri and Hiccup tied to bite back their laughter at the sight. "To avoid getting your bottom burnt because people don't watch what they say."

From the water trough, Snotlout glared towards her in irritation as his face burning as red as Hookfang's satisfied scales.

"Shut up, Astrid."

\* \* \*

><p><em>You have no idea how long I've been waiting to put a Snotlout and Hookfang joke into this story, and I finally managed! :p Last chapter, I also had some people asking me about why Leif didn't have a Terrible Terror last chapter too, now you know he does! That storyline just linked in better with this chapter is all. There was also a quote in this chapter as well about embarrassing Siri being entertaining to them and I would like to credit the series 'Call the Midwife' for giving me that hilarious quote! Also, Siri's reaction to when she got the saddle, which was exactly like Vanellope in Wreck it Ralph was not intentional! :p I didn't realise until after I wrote it lol.<em>

\_Anyway, Siri has a Nadder! And I would like to thank MI games BeremyHaylijah freak, for giving me the name Night Star for the dragon, as well as a whole list of names, that made narrowing them down so difficult! They were amazing and Night Star is a wonderful name! Thanks to everyone who suggested names! Now, contrary to what people may think, no, I did not choose a Nadder for her to be like Astrid. I have just always imagined her with a Nadder. I also quite like Nadders, and I always thought they'd be the best dragon for her with both of them being a little vain for perfection, although in different ways, but I understand why you would all think that :)\_

\_Speaking of being compared to her mother, yes, Siri is starting to feel a bit of animosity towards the fact that people always seem to compare her to her mother, which fits in well with her getting a Nadder too, because it will just make the comparisons go into overdrive now. This will come to a head next chapter where \_\_\*\*'while competing in a dragon racing competition, Siri grows tired of the endless comparisons to her mother, and in an effort to stop them, tries to change her image, with interesting results'. \*\*\_\_This includes trying to act like her father at some point too lol. The dragon competition is for all the different age groups of dragon riders too, so yes, you will see Hiccup and the others taking part

too! Siri will have just turned 13 in this chapter too, and she will really start to grow up a bit by this time as you'll see ;p I'm not giving anything away though!\_

\_Anyway, **\*\*PLEASE\*\*** \_\_**\*\*DON'T FORGET TO REVIEW!** For some reason, this chapter seems to be getting barely any reviews at all, even for a weekday :/**\*\***\_\_ Just remember, \_\_**\*\*NO FLAMES\*\***\_\_, but \_\_**\*\*KIND**  
**\*\***\_\_constructive criticism is accepted :) \_

\_Thanks for reading! :D\_

## 36. Chapter 36: Dragon Racing

\_Hi guys, I am so sorry for the long wait for this chapter! I know it's been 4 weeks and for that I apologise. Not only did I have a migraine when I began the chapter, I just haven't had the time to spend on it as I usually would, especially last week when I was preparing for my university graduation :) But it's finished now, and again I'm sorry.\_

\_Ok, so last chapter I said this was going to be about a dragon racing competition. It still is, but when I began to write it, I realised I had way more material then I first thought, so this chapter has now been split into 2 chapters. This one is 11,000 words long (my longest chapter yet!) and is mainly the light hearted side of the storyline and involves a lot of dragon racing, while next chapter will delve into the storyline of Siri's animosity about being compared to her mother. All in all, it really just sets up the storyline. \_

\_Ok, so in this chapter, Siri is now 13 and has grown up a fair bit. I also tried to include the other kids, but wasn't able to incorporate all of them, and a new character, who I'd been keeping my eye on if I were you ;). Hope you enjoy it! I hope its ok as there are some parts I'm not really thrilled on, but after 4 weeks it's hard to tell. \_

\_On with the chapter!\_

\_By the way, one reviewer mentioned to me last chapter about Hiccup and Snotlout being cousins. Now, that may be true in the book series, but in the movie verse, this hasn't been confirmed or seems to be the case at all, so for the interest of my story's canon, Snotlout and Hiccup are NOT cousins here. Which means Siri and Lennart are also NOT related. \_

\* \* \*

<p><span>Chapter 36 â€" Dragon Racing<span>

\* \* \*

><p>"I'm confused," Lennart said.<p>

"How are you confused?" Siri chortled as she stroked Night Star gently, all the while keeping an eye on the other dragons occupying the stable. "It's a \_competition\_."

"That's just it, though," Lennart replied, swatting at his best

friend's dragon who was trying to eat his hair. "Isn't the point of dragon racing to compete against each other as it is?" The twelve year's brows furrowed in confusion as he tried to wrap his head around the conversation. "How can you have a dragon racing competition when it's a competition anyway? I just...don't get it."

"What's there to get?" Siri giggled, watching as her dragon nibbled on Lennart's hair. "It's just a different version of dragon racing that just..." Siri trailed off after a moment, at a loss of how best to explain the situation. "Huh," she chuckled. "You know, I have no idea how it works either." Siri turned to her father, leaning up against the stable doors. "Hey dad?" she asked, immediately getting his attention. "How does this dragon competition work? It doesn't make any sense."

"Yeah, well, don't blame me for the confusion," Hiccup answered her with a grin, as he pushed himself off the stable door he'd been leaning on. "It was your mother who came up with this one, not me. Take it up with her." He turned to look at his wife, keeping an eye on the two younger Haddock children as they played with Stormfly nearby. Hearing her name mentioned, though, she immediately turned around with a wide grin spread across her lips.

"Hey, I never saw anyone complain about it," she pointed out.

"But," Siri interjected with a frown, "how does it work? How can you have a dragon racing competition with the whole village?"

"Did you pay attention anytime this competition was held, Seer?" her mother asked her with a shake of her head. "It's not like it's a new thing."

"Not really," Siri admitted sheepishly, as she turned her attention back to Night Star, who was nudging her for more attention. "So, how does it work?" she asked again, with a guilty grin in her mother's direction.

"What are we going to do with you, Seer?" Astrid shook her head, amused. "Well, you know how you beat everyone else out to represent your age group?" she asked her daughter. Siri nodded. "Well, the best six...or eight," she corrected quickly. "It depends on how many are in the age group. Anyway, those people go on to represent their age group. The way the competition works is that each day, two people get knocked out of each group until there is one person left standing, and that person represents the whole of that age group in the finals at the end of the week. Do you understand?" Astrid asked the four kids, who were all hanging on to the Viking warriors every word.

"I get it," Siri said with a nod. "Each day the age groups get smaller and smaller until there is one person to compete in the finals, where every age group is represented. That sounds reasonable."

"Does it?" Lennart replied, with a raise of his eyebrows. "Because to me it sounds like a lot of effort to get one winner. Not that it doesn't sound like fun," he added quickly, seeing the questioning looks he was being thrown from several sets of eyes around the stables. "Mum was looking forward to competing with you guys for the

first time this year, actually. She can't now of course, but..."

"Well," Astrid grinned, "she still could if she wanted too. I mean, I did when I was pregnant. But of course, your mother and I are very different people..."

"Meaning she's not as competitive as you and won't care that her dragon racing medal would go to someone different for one year?" Hiccup teased, his eyes glinting mischievously as he glanced over at his wife. "Because if that's what you mean, then you two are very different people indeed...not the arm!" Hiccup exclaimed quickly, skirting out of the way of Astrid's clenched fist. "I happen to need this arm in full working order to beat you tomorrow!" he reminded her.

"Good point," Astrid agreed, "you'll need both arms in full working order to beat me tomorrow." She glanced back at Hiccup's arm, brows knitted in thought. "Hmm..."

"Don't you dare!" Hiccup squeaked, as he backed away from his competitive spouse. "You can't just take me out, you know?!"

Astrid emitted a fake sigh. "Yeah, you're right," she told him with a wide smile, as she leaned in to kiss his cheek. "Guess I'll just to win fair and square like I do every year."

"At least you play fair and square," Hiccup admitted. "I swear Snotlout gets dirtier every year. Didn't he try and knock you off Stormfly last year?"

"Not try; succeeded," Astrid reminded him with a shake of her head. "It's just lucky for him Stormfly has quick reactions because he wouldn't have survived if he'd hurt me. I didn't mean that literally, Len," she added hastily seeing Lennart's flabbergasted glance in her direction. "But he would have been in big trouble."

Lennart shrugged, a grin forming on his face. "Don't worry," he assured the Viking Chieftainess, "if it wasn't you that got to dad first, it would have been mum. Either way he wouldn't have survived."

"I always knew there was a reason I liked that woman," Astrid grinned as Hiccup and Siri howled with laughter beside her.

"Yeah, well, despite that, I think that's the reason mum doesn't want to compete this year," Lennart said. "Even though dad would never hurt her, I don't think she wants to play with how rough the game can get with him. Better to stay on the sidelines, I guess," he shrugged.

"Fair enough," Astrid said, understanding. "The only reason I played pregnant one time was because I didn't even know I was pregnant, or I would have sat out too. Maybe," she added as Hiccup raised his eyebrows in disbelief at her. He chuckled.

"Is the competition dangerous?" Siri asked her mother, interested. "Because I'm very surprised daddy would let me play if it really is like this." She gave her father a teasing grin.



"Sorry, sweetie, but your age group has rules," he told her with an answering grin. "No foul play allowed until you're 18 and over."

"Way to take the fun out of it," Siri responded dryly, allowing Hiccup to roll his eyes with a small smile.

"There'll be plenty of time for foul play when you're older," Hiccup told her. "For now, though," he said with a stern glance to his daughter, "you play by the rules."

"Fine," Siri agreed with a disgruntled sigh, before her lips twitched with a small smile. "At least I get to dragon race, though," she added a bit more cheerfully. "Tomorrow is going to be so cool!"

"I wish\_ I\_ could play," Lennart grumbled as he looked around at the dragons in the stall. "I'm missing out on the fun."

"You'll get to play next year, Len, just be patient," his mother's voice came from the doorway. She smiled at Hiccup and Astrid as they turned towards her. "I thought I might find you all here," she said as she entered the stables with a smile in Siri's direction. "Preparing for tomorrow, Seer?" she asked the teenager. "I bet you're looking forward to it."

"Oh, you have no idea," Siri replied with an excitable hop. "I've been looking forward to this since I was a kid! Now I just hope I can make everyone proud," she added with a nervous glance towards her parents who gave her reassuring smiles.

"You always make us proud, baby," Hiccup assured her with a small smile.

Siri rolled her eyes, amused. "You always say that."

"And we always mean it," Astrid pointed out. "But don't worry about making anyone proud tomorrow, just have fun! Because that's all I think of, I assure you," she added with a laugh.

"And winning," Hiccup chortled under his breath.

"Speaking of winning," Anna cut in with an exasperated sigh as she turned her attention to her son, "we better get going, Len. Your father wants to go to bed early in preparation for his 'winning race'" Blank faced, she made quotation marks in the air .

Hiccup scoffed. "In his dreams! Even when he cheats, he still manages to lose." Hiccup rolled his eyes, before turning to Anna with a sheepish grin. "No offense, Anna."

"None taken," she chuckled. "I love the man, but even I have to admit him and dragon racing do not get along." She turned to Lennart with a grin. "Don't tell your father I said that."

"No worries there, mum," he assured her with a laugh, before he turned to Siri with a smile. "I'll see you tomorrow, Seer. When does she play?" he asked Hiccup as he turned towards him

"Not until last, so you get to watch everyone else make a fool of themselves first," Hiccup explained with a chuckle. "Astrid and I are

up first."

Siri rolled her eyes. "You don't make fools of yourselves."

"Either way, it's going to be awesome," Lennart grinned as he went to follow his mother out. "See you tomorrow!" he called back.

" Well, I guess we should go to bed, too," Hiccup said as he glanced up at the night sky past the two vanishing figures. It was well past dark and the stars had been out for some time. "I don't know about you two," he glanced towards his wife and daughter, "but I sure don't want to lose all because I didn't sleep."

\* \* \*

><p>"How long does it each round take?" Siri asked as they walked towards the plaza.<p>

"About half an hour each," Hiccup replied. "Because there's six rounds to get through, we had to shorten the dragons races to fit them all in."

"Why?" Leif asked, furrowing his brows. "Couldn't we just have six really long rounds?"

Hiccup looked back towards his son with a chuckle. "Do you really want to be sitting around for over six hours watching each round, buddy?" he asked the seven year old. "Because I certainly wouldn't!"

"Only because you're afraid I'd beat you in a longer round!" Snotlout mocked as he came up beside the family. He turned to Hiccup and Astrid. "You ready to lose, my friends?" he grinned.

"You wish!" Astrid exclaimed before Hiccup could respond. "The last time you won this competition was, oh...never!" she mocked.

"The only reason I lose is because you two cheat!"

"Oh come off it..."

Siri raised her eyebrows at the immaturity happening around her. "Do I need to mediate this?" she asked the so called 'adults'.

"Get used to it, Siri," Anna cut in with a sigh. "Because it's going to be immature like this all week."

"It's not immaturity," Hiccup protested with a glance towards Astrid. "It's...competitiveness."

"Ah huh," Siri said sceptically. "You tell yourself that, dad."

Hiccup grinned. "Don't you say we're being immature, because you'll be doing the same thing when it comes to your round. And don't say you won't-" he said as Siri went to argue, "-because you're as competitive as the next Viking."

"Aren't you too old to be this competitive, though?" Siri teased her father, making him blush bright red as the rest of the group howled

with laughter around them.

"Yeah, Hiccup, aren't you too old?" Snotlout said smugly, causing Hiccup to give him a disbelieving glare.

"Well if I'm too old, so are you! We're the same age, idiot!"

"Oh, burn!" Sigmund sniggered as Snotlout's face turned as red as Hiccup's as he struggled with a comeback.

Lennart rolled his eyes. "Real nice, Sig."

Anna sighed loudly. "I'm surrounded by children," she said. "This is going to be a \_long\_ day."

"Don't tell me they're at it already?" Valka asked as the group approached her. "The day hasn't even started yet!"

"Yep," Siri answered her, before Hiccup and Astrid could protest. "They're trying to out mock each other. What?" she asked her parents with a grin. "It's true."

"My daughter seems to think we're acting like children," Hiccup explained to his mother with a smirk. "Although I believe she'll be eating her words by the end of the day." He turned his grin to his daughter, which she returned.

"You want to bet on that?" she asked her father with a cross of her arms. "I bet that I don't stoop to your level by the end of my race. If I win, you can't mock Snotlout in the next dragon race."

"You're on," Hiccup agreed, holding out his hand for his daughter to shake. "But only because I know you won't win."

"We'll see about...that..." Siri trailed off as they entered the crowded grandstands, where hundreds of Vikings were already assembled, cheering loudly as their Chief entered the competition arena. "Wow, that's a lot of people," Siri said, swallowing nervously.

"And they'll be the ones that will bring out your competitive side, whether you like it or not," Hiccup explained, waving a hand around to the noisy crowd. He turned back to Siri, who was glancing up at the crowd in awe. "You still want that bet?" he asked her.

She looked up at him, uncertainty filling her eyes, but she nodded anyway. "Yep," she said, drawing herself up confidently.

Hiccup shrugged. "Alright," he said, shaking her hand.

"You're going to regret this, sweetheart," Valka told her with a smile. "This crowd brings out the competitive side in anyone." She coughed awkwardly. "Even me," she added quietly.

Siri raised her eyebrows interestedly. "Really?" she teased. "I never expected that from you Grandma." Valka blushed.

"Are you sure you don't want to join us, mum?" Hiccup asked the dragon woman with a grin. "We have a free spot."

"And leave you all without a referee?" Valka said with a glance towards the waiting players. "Not a chance, son. Someone has to keep you all from cheating."

"We don't cheat," Astrid said with a glance towards Snotlout who glared back towards his Cheiftainness.

"What are you looking at me for?!" he argued.

"I think we better let them start before they kill each other," Anna said to Valka, as Astrid and Snotlout continued to glare at each other. Seeing this exchange, Valka gave a nod.

"I think you're right," she agreed. Turning to the crowd, she nodded to Gobber waiting by the horn, who blew it as loud as he could as soon as he met Valka's eyes. Within moments, it was silent.

"I think that's our cue to go," Siri said quickly, as she gestured to the others. "We'll be cheering you from the grandstands guys," she told her parents with a smile, who happily returned it.

"Thanks, Seer," her mother beamed. "We'll come and get you when it's your turn."

Siri nodded. "Sure thing, mum." She turned her gaze up into the crowd and spotting Anna with the other kids, she gestured to Lennart, who quickly turned to his father with a grin.

"Don't cheat, dad," he said.

Snotlout scoffed. "I don't cheat," he said. "I play hard."

"Whatever you say, dad," Lennart said amused, before he followed Siri up into the grandstands just as Hiccup began to explain the first race.

"Welcome to the end-of-year dragon racing competition!" Hiccup exclaimed loudly to the attentive crowd. "Today the six age groups, the 13 to 15 year olds-" Hiccup looked up into the crowd, and spotting his daughter, beamed at her which she returned with a cheerful wave, "the 16 to 18 year olds, 19 to 21 year olds, 22 to 25 year olds, 26 to 30 year olds and over 30's will compete to represent their age group in the final round in four days' time. Each of you-" Hiccup swept his eyes through the listening crowd, "-are the best in your age group, so please do not think this is going to be easy! Today's round will see your team knocked down to four, with the top four scorers proceeding to tomorrow's round." Hiccup looked over at his mother with a grin. "My mother will be here to referee each round to make sure there is no funny business, and let me assure you, there will be no getting around her sharp eyes-

"So don't try and cheat," Valka interjected with a stern eye around the crowd, "because I will be watching all of you."

Hiccup chuckled slightly, before his face turned serious. "Now, almost anything goes in dragon racing, but if there is any dangerous play or funny business, that person will be immediately disqualified." Hiccup looked over towards his group. "The over 30's will compete first, before it goes backwards from there," Hiccup said as he turned to his mother, giving her a nod to begin.

"I want a nice clean game today," Valka told them firmly, her eyes lingering on Snotlout and the twins for a moment before she waved at Gobber to get ready. "Riders at the ready!"

"Ready to lose, Chief?" Snotlout mocked, giving Hiccup a smug grin.

"Are you?" Hiccup replied, unfazed, as Toothless looked at Hookfang with narrowed eyes.

"Are both of you?" Astrid asked the two men with a sly grin, just as Valka held up a red flag.

"Riders ready!" Hiccup and the others crouched low on their dragons. "And... go!"

No sooner had the horn sounded, Hiccup and the others shot past each other as fast as their dragons were able to, almost knocking Valka off her feet in the process as they headed toward the sky, looking for any signs of the loose sheep they were so desperate to recover.

"Here, sheepy sheepy!" Tuffnut called out as he and Ruffnut circled the town.

"Oh, yeah, they're really going to answer you back!" Astrid shouted towards him as she flew past him, keeping her eyes peeled on the ground for any signs of white amongst the wooden dwellings below and spotting one, she immediately made her way towards it, only to be intercepted by Snotlout, coming from the opposite direction.

"Nice try, Astrid, but this one is mine!" Snotlout taunted, as he continued his way towards the sheep, arm outstretched.

"Don't you even think about it!" Astrid screeched, urging Stormfly on as they came closer and closer to each other, before a black figure rushed past the both of them, snatching the sheep away in front of their eyes.

"Sorry guys, but this one is mine!" Hiccup called out to them, turning his head towards them where he gave Astrid a large grin. "Sorry, sweetheart!"

"Don't you sweet talk me!" Astrid called after him as he and Toothless flew out of sight. "Cheater!"

"And Hiccup takes the first point!" Valka announced loudly as Hiccup came into view, dumping his sheep into his basket hurriedly before beginning his second lap.

"Go dad!" Siri screamed, jumping out of her seat. She turned her head towards the others. "I could barely even see him!"

"All I saw was a blur of black," Lennart said, squinting his eyes on the action. He looked back towards Siri. "Can you really play like this?" he asked her, his eyes widening in surprise.

Siri shook her head. "I can barely stand on top of Night Star, let alone play like that," she admitted. "No," she said with a shake of

her head, "only the older players can do that. Although I can," she emphasised the word 'can' greatly, "snatch a sheep from another player without them noticing." Lennart raised his eyebrows in surprise making her giggle. "Yeah, it surprised me the first time I did it too," she said with a laugh, turning her head back to the action where her mother was doing just what she was discussing.

"I'll take that!" Astrid exclaimed loudly from behind Snotlout, who jumped in surprise as Astrid appeared out of nowhere, grabbing the bewildered sheep from him and took off towards her goal.

"That isn't yours, Astrid!" Snotlout yelled angrily as he flew after her. "Give it back!"

"You want it, come and get it!" Keeping an eye on Snotlout out of the corner of her eye, Astrid urged Stormfly towards their goal, only to be blocked metres away by the twins coming in the opposite direction.

"Can't get past us, Astrid!" Tuffnut grinned. "We're like two guards standing..." he frowned in confusion, "...well...guard I guess."

"You're not a very good one either!" Astrid said, as Stormfly easily ducked underneath the two riders, emerging in front of their goal without Ruff and Tuff even flinching.

"Urgh...what just happened?" Tuffnut asked stupidly as he tried to see where Astrid had gone too.

"You let her score a point is what happened!" Ruffnut yelled. "You were supposed to block her, you idiot!"

"Oh yeah, well she got past you too you know!"

"Well, you-"

"Stop fighting and catch a sheep!" Eric yelled out in his father's direction. "Mum's scored and you didn't even notice!"

Hearing his son's comment, Tuffnut frowned and looked around, where sure enough; Annika had just snuck past the bickering twins to land a sheep in her own goal.

"Oh, come on!" Tuffnut exclaimed, his eyes wide with disbelief. "What sort of wife are you, 'Nika! I'm losing!"

She snorted. "Not my problem, Tuff!" she yelled as she tore past her husband with a playful wave in his direction.

"Well, how do you like that?!" Tuffnut stammered with a look in his sister's direction. "No love even from my own wife!"

"Well, maybe you would if you would just stop bickering!" eight year old Kelda screeched in her uncle and mother's direction. "Get going!"

"Oh, yeah," Ruffnut said stupidly, before she urged Barf to keep going, causing Kelda to inwardly groan as her mother finally got back

in the game. Beside her, Leif was squinting around the flight path for any sign of his own parents, and failing to find them, he turned to his older sister.

"Seer, can you see mummy?" he asked her, perplexed. "Or daddy for that matter?" he added with a slight frown.

Siri squinted at the racers. "No," she admitted with a quick glance to her brother. "I haven't seen them in ages...oh wait, there they are!" she shouted, pointing an index finger towards the water tower where her mother was advancing towards an oblivious sheep, chewing away on a clump of grass below. Advancing further towards the sheep, Stormfly's claws opened and Astrid's eyes were narrowed in concentration, before-

"What the...?!" Astrid wheeled around. "Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third I'm going to kill you!" Astrid screeched as she pulled Stormfly up just before she collided into the ground, having been intercepted by a black bur at the last moment.

"Sorry, Astrid!" Hiccup apologised, not even stopping to look back towards her as he made a spectacular dive towards the open baskets where he unceremoniously dumped the bewildered sheep into not his basket, but his wife's, causing amused groans to emit from the watching crowd.

"You just couldn't help yourself, could you?" Astrid asked him, as she flew up beside him. "You just had to show off!"

"Why else would I steal a sheep from my wife?" Hiccup winked, before he shot ahead of her, leaving her and Stormfly firmly in the dust.

Leif shook his head in the crowd, a grin forming on his face. "You're a suck up, daddy!" Leif yelled in his father's direction. "Mummy could have done that herself!"

"Leif!" Siri exclaimed in shock as she turned to glance at her younger brother. "We don't call daddy a suck up!"

"Why?" he asked her, confused. "You do."

"Well...yeah," the thirteen year old admitted sheepishly. "But I'm a teenager; I'm allowed to say it!"

"Who says?!"

"The laws of teenage hood!"

"That's not even real!"

"If you two don't stop arguing, I'll separate you both!" Anna warned them, with a firm glare in the bickering sibling's direction. "What sort of example are you setting for your sister?" She nodded to three year old Ingrid, calmly sitting in Leif's lap as she watched the dragon race in front of her. Upon hearing the conversation around her, though, she looked up toward her sister as a wide grin spread across her face.

"Daddy a suck up!" she announced with a round of giggles.

Anna groaned. "See what I mean?" she pointed out as Siri gently bent down in front of her little sister.

"Ingrid, we don't say that about daddy," Siri told her gently, flicking her eyes up to Leif's, who hurriedly looked away from his sister's glare.

"You does," Ingrid pointed out, her eyes wide with confusion. She turned to Leif. "Leifey too."

"Yeah, and me and Leifey are naughty," Siri said with a small smile towards her little sister. "That doesn't mean you have to be, okay?"

Ingrid nodded. "Otay," she agreed with a smile.

"Good girl," her sister smiled, just as a loud groan emitted from the crowd.

"What happened?" Siri asked, turning back to the action, where she saw Fishlegs and Meatlug sprawled upon the ground; Fishlegs with a hand to his head. Looking up at the dragon race above, it wasn't hard to figure out what had happened. Racing away from the scene was Snotlout, his face innocent as he tried to get away from the scene of the crime.

"Dad hit Fishlegs right in the guts," Sigmund explained to the older girl with a smirk. "It was a nice shot too!"

"It was not a nice shot, Sigmund!" Anna reprimanded him furiously, casting her middle son a heated glare. "Fishlegs could have been seriously hurt!"

"But he didn't-"

"Sig, stop arguing with mum, you know as well as I do that you'll lose," Lennart said warningly, causing his brother to huff, before plopping back down on the bench. Lennart looked back over at Fishlegs. "Is he alright?" he asked his mother, who gave a reassuring nod.

"He's up, but Valka doesn't look happy about your father." Anna groaned. "Why does it always have to be him?"

"Kick him out, Miss Valka!" Kelda screamed towards the dragon woman. "That's cheating!"

"I thought anything went in the older age groups?" Siri asked the younger Ingerman child, who shook her head.

"No, knocking someone out of the air isn't allowed, although you are allowed to knock into someone mid-air. What?" she asked as everyone stared at the young girl in surprise. "My daddy is the assistant dragon trainer with Miss Valka. I know how dragon racing works."

"You take after your father it seems, sweetie," Anna noted with a smile towards the knowledgeable young girl.



Kelda's eyes lit up at that. "Thanks," she said, before she flicked her eyes back to the game, where Snotlout was allowed back into the game, although begrudgingly, just as Fishlegs landed his first sheep.

"Go daddy!" Kelda screamed wildly, jumping up in her seat. "Go mummy!" she added as Ruffnut and Tuffnut charged towards a lone sheep. Clinging tightly to the dragon, Ruffnut hung upside down, arms outstretched as they itched closer to the dragon.

"You snooze, you lose!" Snotlout mocked them, as at the last minute, he snatched the dragon from the woman's fingertips, leaving her dangling precariously close to the ground.

"Unfair, Snotlout, that was ours!" she yelled, flinching as her hair made contact with the ground for a moment, before Tuffnut urged both heads of the Zippleback back into the sky.

"Is it just me, or is this a really dirty game?" Siri asked. She beamed. "Oh Thor this is going to be awesome!" she exclaimed excitedly.

"You're weird," Lennart told her with a laugh, making her shrug and turn her attention back to the game where Fishlegs ran into Snotlout unexpectedly, leading him to dropping his prized sheep straight into Fishlegs waiting hands, where he quickly dumped it into Ruff and Tuff's basket.

"Oh, come on!" Siri laughed, as she watched Ruffnut throw her hands up at her husband's chivalry. "What is it with men catching the sheep for their wives?! They can do it themselves you know!" she called out to them.

"You mean you wouldn't like for a guy to do that for you?" Anna asked the girl, her expression intrigued.

Siri frowned. "No," she said. "Why would I?"

Anna raised her eyebrows with a slight smile. "Okay," she said, letting the conversation go.

"We are halfway through our first round, folks!" Valka's voice suddenly came from the podium, "and the scores are like this so far..." Valka looked down at her notes. "2 sheep for Astrid, 1 for Hiccup, 1 for Ruff and Tuff, 1 for Fishlegs and 1 for Annika, with Snotlout trailing with 0. It's anyone's game at the moment!"

"That won't make dad happy," Lennart said, watching as his father crossed his arms in a huff at the knowledge he was yet to score.

"Well, maybe if he just played like a normal person, he wouldn't be in this position," Anna pointed out, watching as her husband continued the game, albeit with a pouting look on his face. She shook her head. "How old is he?" she snorted. "5?" She turned her gaze towards Siri, watching the scene with a slight grin twitching at the corners of her lips. "I hope\_ you\_ don't act like that, sweetie," she said, with a nod towards her husband. "That's being a sore loser, that is."

"I won't, I promise," Siri giggled as she watched Snotlout finally grab hold of an unlucky sheep, and fly towards his basket, unaware of Ruff and Tuff coming up hot on his tail.

"Oh gods, they're gonna crash!" Siri squealed, jumping up out of her seat as the two dragons edged closer and closer to each other.

"No, they're just going to miss!" Kelda exclaimed nervously, her lips clenched tight together as she and the others watched as all three dragon riders panicked and tried to turn around, only to collide with a sickening crunch, sending them with a collision course with the ground, which they hit with a loud \_crash.\_

"Ohhhhhh!" the crowd collectively gasped, all of them standing on tip toes to see the scene below them.

"Is mum ok?" Kelda asked worriedly as she squinted her eyes towards the tangled dragons on the ground, where the other dragon riders had stopped to help.

"Are they\_ all\_, ok?" Anna added nervously as she scrambled to see her husband and the twins on the ground, before breathing a sigh of relief as both Snotlout and the twins stood up, a little dazed, but otherwise uninjured. Seeing the crowd staring down at them, they quickly raised their arms in a cheerful wave, before hopping back upon their dragons without a second thought; the sheep now vanished from sight.

"That\_ had\_ to have hurt!" Sigmund chortled as he watched his father resume play. "Dad must have a head like a rock. That was awesome!" He turned to Siri, the grin not fading from his face. "I hope you have a tough head, Siri," he said. "By the looks of it, you're going to need it!"

Siri shrugged, undeterred by the boy's discourtesy towards her. "I'm sure I do," she shrugged. "Especially since all Vikings are supposed to...GO DAD!" she suddenly screamed, seeing her father head towards the baskets out of the corner of her eye, where he sailed over the baskets and landed a bored looking sheep effortlessly into his basket. All without stopping.

"Now, \_that's \_how you dragon race!" Leif exclaimed excitedly, as Astrid quickly landed another sheep into her own basket right behind Hiccup, before she turned to the crowd and waved a hand to her kids, who all waved wildly back at her.

"You go, mum!" Siri called out to her proudly. "Show them how's it's done!"

"Go, mummy!" Ingrid yelled gleefully, before she lifted her head up towards her brother. "Is mummy winning?" the three year old asked him, tentatively.

Leif grinned at her. "She is at the moment," he nodded. "But the game isn't over yet!" he added as he watched Annika, swerve smoothly around a struggling Snotlout and suddenly land another sheep into her own basket.

"It's all down to this last lap now!" Valka exclaimed breathlessly, her eyes focussed on the game happening around her. "After this last

sheep is caught, the black sheep will be released to end the game!"

"I'm not finishing this game pointless!" Snotlout huffed as he circled around the stadium, eyes peeled for the last sheep, and quickly spotting it, he dive bombed down the ground; only to be intercepted by Fishlegs, cutting him off as he got close.

"That's not yours, Fish brain!" Snotlout sneered, as fly up behind him and swung a shot towards the husky Viking, who effectively dodged, causing Snotlout to flail for a moment as he struggled to stay upright on the Monstrous Nightmare, who manoeuvred slightly in an effort to keep his rider from falling. It was a moment that cost him.

"Fishlegs lands the last sheep!" Valka called out, before gesturing to Gobber nearby. "It's time for the final lap!"

"See if you can keep up with me, babe!" Astrid teased her husband as he readied himself for the catch. He grinned at her as she flew over.

"Are you sure it's not me you'll have to keep up with, Min Elser?!" Hiccup replied with a grin, making her suddenly blush bright red, just as the black sheep was catapulted into the air, and was just as quickly caught in the talons of Toothless, who threw a surprised Astrid a grin in victory.

"You cheater, dad!" Siri laughed. "You knew mum would blush!"

"That was the point, sweetie!" she heard him call back in amusement, making her shake in head in hilarity.

"And the game is over!" Valka exclaimed, with a grin around to the players. "The final scores were Hiccup on 12 points, Astrid on 3, Annika on 2, Fishlegs on 2, Ruff and Tuff on 1 and Snotlout scoreless on 0!" She smiled as she cast her eyes over the winners.

"Congratulations to Hiccup, Astrid, Annika and Fishlegs. You four will now be advancing to the next round in the over 30's race tomorrow. Ruff, Tuff and Snotlout," she added, casting them a sympathetic glance. "I'm sorry, but you are out, but thank you for a terrific game. Round 2 will begin in 10 minutes. Can I have the 26 to 30 year olds please come down to their dragons..."

"\_That\_," Leif said with an elated grin, "was awesome!" He turned to Siri, a look of awe spreading across his delighted face. "You are so lucky!" he told her. "I can't wait until I get to finally play!"

"Yeah, well hopefully you play better than me," Snotlout's grumbling voice appeared beside them, as he inched his way through the crowded grandstands, before plopping down in a huff on a seat beside his wife. "That sucked," he mumbled, crossing his arms in irritation.

"Oh, come on dad, you played good," Lennart reassured him, patting his shoulder gently. "You just...weren't able to score."

Snotlout gave a slight shrug before muttering unintelligible under his breath that sounded an awful lot like 'stupid game'.

"The better Viking won, sweetie," Anna told him kindly, as she placed an around her husband's shoulders. "If you didn't play rough, maybe you would have won."

"I guess," he mumbled, before was unable to resist a small smile towards his wife, which she returned before she gave him a swift kiss on the cheek.

"Oh gods, I'm going to be sore for a week," they heard Fishlegs groan as he, Annika, Ruff and Tuff made their way into the grandstand, all four of them looking a little worse for wear, but cheerful all the same. As they reached their kids, they beamed widely, before plopping down on the seats with them.

"Are you ok?" Kelda asked her parents, uneasily, as both of them were covered in bumps and cuts. "You both crashed pretty hard."

"We're fine, sweetie," Fishlegs reassured her, with a slight wince. "Just a little sore."

"Lucky for me, our heads are like rocks," Ruffnut said with a slight chuckle, as Siri looked around with a slight frown.

"Where are my parents?" she asked the others.

"They're staying down with Valka to help referee," Annika told her, with a nod down below. "They'll come and get you when it's time for you to head down-"

"Ewww!" Leif suddenly exclaimed, cutting off Annika's comment. "Get a room!"

Following her brother's line of sight quickly, Siri's curious expression quickly turned to one of disgust seeing the sight below her where her parents were locked into a tight embrace. "Oh, gross!" she called out. "Mum, dad, do you really have to do that now?!"

Hearing their kids loud exclamations, Hiccup and Astrid quickly broke apart with a sudden jump, chuckling with embarrassment.

"Sorry!" they exclaimed with sheepish expressions, before red faced, they hurried off to join Valka, who had been watching the scene with mild amusement.

"Right in front of everyone!" Siri exclaimed incredulously a she watched her parents retreating forms. "I swear parents exist just to embarrass us!" Mortified, she placed her head in her hands, before she looked over at Lennart, who was looking after Hiccup and Astrid with a look of disgust upon his own face.

"Do your parents do that?" she asked him, her face red with embarrassment.

"Not like that, no," he said, relieved.

"Lucky you," Siri chuckled, her face returning to its normal shade of pink. "I swear they do that to embarrass us. I will \_never \_do that as long as I live!"

"Never say never, Seer," Annika chuckled quietly from behind her. Siri frowned.

"Why's that?" she asked the older woman, curiously, who just shrugged with a small smile.

"Just saying," she said, furtively, before she turned her attention to the dragon race in front of her, leading Siri to shrug before following Annika's lead in watching the 26 to 30 year olds competition which was even dirtier then the last round, but also more interesting; a pattern that continued with the following age groups.

"They all have a different style of playing," Siri observed in fascination, watching as a girl in the 19 to 21 age group swung down from her saddle to grab hold of an unsuspecting sheep. "No one has played the same." She turned to the adults sitting behind her. "Have you ever noticed that?" she asked them curiously.

"No one has the same personality, so everyone plays differently, even if it's subtle," Fishlegs explained to the thirteen year old with smile. "You'll find even you play differently to everyone you've watched today, even if you don't notice it yourself."

"Huh," Siri said with raised brows, "never really noticed."

"Siri!"

Siri turned around to see her father edging along the row of seats, trying to spot her. As he did, he quickly waved her over with an excited smile.

"Seer, you're supposed to come down and get ready for your race now."

She frowned. "But I thought I wasn't on until last?" she asked, half getting up off her seat.

"You're not," Hiccup explained to her gently, as he joined her. "But the rest of your age group are meeting up now, so you can meet each other and get your dragons ready. Is that alright?" he asked her.

"Never thought of it like that," Siri said with a nod, as she stood up. "I'll come." Turning around, she threw a grin in Lennart's direction. "Wish me luck!"

"You won't need it!" Lennart reassured her, getting up to give her a quick hug. "I'll be watching," he told her with a smile. "Just don't do anything my dad would do!" he laughed.

"Hey!" came Snotlout's amused voice from behind them, making them giggle.

"I won't," she assured her friend, before she went to follow her dad down to the stables followed by a loud chorus of good lucks from her siblings and friends, which in all honesty, made her feel more nervous than comforted. By the time she had reached the stables, the

feeling that a colony of butterflies had taken up residence in her stomach. Gods, she hoped she didn't throw up.

"Hey, Seer!"

Startled from her reverie, Siri's eyes flicked over towards the group in front of her, only for them to fall on a familiar face.

"Sorsi!" Siri exclaimed, relieved, as she saw the older girl grinning over at her. "You won a spot too?"

The fifteen year old rolled her eyes at the comment. "You idiot!" she snorted. "You went against me in the qualifying round, remember? I caught the black sheep!" Sorsi gave a shake of her blonde head. "Wow...you must be nervous!"

"Yeah...kind of," Siri heard herself admit, as she heard loud cheers suddenly erupt from behind her.

"Don't worry, Seer," she heard Sorsi say, causing her to look up at the fifteen year old quickly. "It's not as scary as you might think. Once you get out there, all you're focussed on is the game and nothing else. Isn't that right, Chief?" she asked Hiccup, glancing up towards him with a quick flash of a smile.

"Always has been for me," Hiccup admitted with a grin, glancing down at his daughter with an encouraging look on his face. "You'll be great, sweetheart, just remember what your mother and I have taught you. Okay?"

Siri nodded, as a smile spread across her lips. "Okay," she replied cheerfully, as the butterflies in her stomach began to disperse. "Thanks, daddy." She stepped forward into Hiccup's arms, giving him a quick squeeze, before stepping back with her hands on her hips. "Can you go now?" she asked him; a grin twitching at the corner of her mouth.

Hiccup laughed, holding his hands up in understanding. "Alright, I'm going, I'm going," he said, a hint of amusement in his voice as he walked away from the small group.

"Well," Sorsi said, as Hiccup walked away, "I guess I better introduce you to the rest of the riders." She swept a hand around to the remaining four Viking teenagers in the group. "Alva." She nodded to a short red headed girl to Siri's left. "Helga." She gave a nod to the tall black haired girl beside Alva. "Ivar." She pointed to one of the two boys, who just gave a slight shrug of acknowledgement towards her. "Don't worry," Solvi whispered, as she flicked her eyes towards the discourteous boy, "he doesn't speak to anyone," before she finally gave a nod to the red haired boy beside her. "And this is my younger brother, Gerold."

"Younger?" Gerold chuckled, who Siri couldn't help noticing, nervous as she was, was rather cute. "I'm only a year younger than you, you know. Not ten!"

"I'm fifteen and you're fourteen; that still counts as a younger brother to me," Solvi pointed out, unfazed, as Siri bent her head down to giggle at Gerold's annoyed expression, just as the warning horn sounded from behind them, effectively cutting off all

conversation.

"Alright, for the next half an hour, we're not friends," Sorsi said as she hopped onto the back of her Monstrous Nightmare, Arrow, before turning to Siri with a reassured nod. "Good luck, Seer; and play to your strengths!" she added quickly, seeing how quickly Siri jumped onto her saddle, before she flew off to take her position.

Following her movements, Siri snorted. "I don't know about you girl, but that sounded as if she was being a friend to me," she giggled, with a pat to the Nadder's side. "You ready, girl?" she asked the dragon, who gave her friend a loud squawk of agreement before taking off quickly in order to get in position.

"With five age groups played, it is now time for the last age group of today; the 13-15 year olds, with two riders playing their first games today. We wish them luck!" Valka called out to the cheering crowd, despite the croakiness that was now her voice after the long day, before she turned to them. "You know the rules," she told them firmly, with a slight smile at her granddaughter. "No ramming each other into the ground and no foul play that could result in injury. The top four players will proceed to the next round." She turned to Gobber with a nod, and following her line of sight, Siri tightened her grip on Night Star's saddle. "Riders, take your positions." Siri lowered herself down with a quick glance to the other players, as Valka slowly brought down the red flag. "And... go!"

Six dragons shot into the air, no more than half a dozen short blurs of colour whizzing past each other as they circled the island, looking for any signs of the allusive sheep they were so desperate to find. Hanging onto Night Star for dear life, Siri narrowly avoided a collision course with Sorsi as she took rapidly changed directions straight towards the amateur dragon racer, causing both her and the Nadder to go spiralling towards another player.

"Oh, come on, that's not fair!" Lennart screamed angrily, watching as Siri straightened herself out, her face flushed with adrenaline as she charged after the other players. "Siri is only new to this game!" He turned towards Hiccup, who had just joined them. "Isn't there rules for new players?" he asked him. "Siri has only just learnt how to sit on Night Star without slipping off!"

Hiccup glanced at the boy, with a shake of his head. "I'm afraid not," he said. "New or not, if she was good enough to get into the competition, she plays by their rules. She can handle it," he added with a quick glance towards his daughter. "She just has to get used to the game..."

Siri streaked past Sorsi slowing down in front of her, eyes gazing intently towards one sheep, when she suddenly noticed a blur of red race past her, causing Night Star to suddenly come to a grounding halt with a screech as Gerold effectively cut the pair off. Before Siri even knew what was happening, he'd swiped the bemused sheep from the ground and had dumped it into his basket, leaving an astonished Siri in his wake. As much as she hated to admit it, it was a good move on his part, no matter how much her stomach boiled with anger at his smug little grin.

"Shake it off and show him what you can do, Seer!" Hiccup yelled from the stands, causing a roar of agreement from the rest of the

group.

Siri grinned. "Let's go, girl!" she urged the Nadder, who gave her a squawk of approval, before she rushed after Gerold and the rest of the group, just as they descended on a nervous looking sheep.

Noticing that the rest of the group was leaving a rather large opening from above from her perspective below the group, Siri's mind twinkled mischievously as an idea shot through her brain. Rubbing Night Star's neck on one side she whispered "Up, Night Star, up!", and complying, her partner rose in a triumphant sweep of wings, before levelling out above the tight knit group around the sheep, before the world became a streaked mess as the pair plummeted towards the earth. The roar of the wind past her face and hands made Siri burst into raucous laughter as her plan began to take shape; right as the other dragon riders were about to strike, Night Star, falling like a comet, shot through the middle of the group and plucked the bewildered sheep like a grape from a vine, Siri laughing loudly the entire way. Hearing a cry of "WHAT WAS THAT?!" emanate from behind her, Siri turned to see the stunned group of dragon riders in disarray; two had crashed into each other, one was flying upside down, and the others were just holding position, absolutely dumbstruck as to what happened.

"Two can play at that game!" Siri yelled back with a huge smile on her face, as she rushed past the stunned crowd and dropped the bemused sheep into the basket, before throwing a victorious grin in her group's direction as she sped past them for another lap.

"GO SIRI!" Astrid screamed proudly as she and Hiccup jumped to their feet, clapping vociferously. "THAT'S MY GIRL!"

"THAT WAS AWESOME!" Lennart added with a proud wave in her direction, which she quickly returned before speeding off in the opposite direction.

"How'd she think of that?" Hiccup asked, dumbfounded, as he watched the rest of the group come to their senses and chase after her. "That was brilliant!"

Astrid turned to him with a grin. "She's a Haddock, babe, did you really expect anything different?" she asked her husband, amused.

"Not really," he admitted with a return grin. "But you had to admit that was pretty good for someone so new to the sport."

"Hey, Seer!" Siri heard Sorsi call out from behind her. She turned around as Sorsi brought her dragon up beside her. "That was awesome!" Sorsi exclaimed, astonished. "I think you might be real competition after all!"

Siri raised her brows. "Real competition?" she asked. "What's that supposed to mean?"

Sorsi shrugged, ignoring the angry glare her friend was giving her. "Don't take it personally, Seer," she said undeterred. "No thirteen year old ever gets through to the next round is all. They're too soft."



"Soft?" Siri scoffed as Sorsi flew off. "Oh, I don't think so!" She glanced down at Night Star, who was giving her friend an amused glance. "Come on, girl," Siri said to the dragon, with a glance in the older girl's direction. "Let's show her what we can do!"

Emitting a loud squawk, Night Star shot off in the direction of the older girl, quickly giving a glare to Gerold as he passed them, before picking up speed, as both Viking and dragon spotted a lone sheep below them, and made a beeline straight for them.

"Sorry, Siri, but this one's mine!" Gerold called out as he rushed past her, arm outstretched for the woolly creature.

"That's what you think!" Siri yelled as she urged her companion forward, where she knocked into the side of Gerold's Monstrous Nightmare, making him wobble slightly, and cling for dear life; dropping the sheep as he held onto the saddle. Taking her chance, Siri charged forward, quickly taking possession of the confused animal into her hands with a proud smirk in the older boy's direction.

"You're not getting me twice!" she said, throwing him a cheeky wink, before making her way towards the baskets, barely earning her point before she was suddenly rammed into at high speed from behind, catching her off guard, allowing her hand to slip from the saddle as she fell towards the ground.

"YOU CHEATER!" Hiccup found himself screaming towards Gerold, who quickly rushed away from the scene, as Night Star caught her rider, inches from the ground. "YOU'D ALREADY LOST THAT SHEEP!"

"Is she alright?" Leif asked his father, as he stood on tip toes in an effort to see his sister.

"YOU CHEATER!" Siri was screaming after the Viking teenager. "I DIDN'T DO THAT TO YOU!"

"She's alright," Astrid chuckled lightly, as she watched her daughter chase after the boy, her face red with anger as he dumped another sheep into his basket. Moments later, Sorsi followed his lead, and dropped a bored looking sheep into her own basket.

"We are at the halfway mark of the final game of the day!" Valka announced to an animated crowd. "Siri and Gerold are leading with two sheep each, with Sorsi trailing with one. Anything could happen!"

"What happens if only three people score in the entire game?" Leif asked curiously as he watched Sorsi earn another point. "Because those three-" he nodded to Sorsi, Siri and Gerold, "-seem to be hogging all the sheep."

Hiccup and Astrid laughed. "Then the three that \_haven't \_scored a point will fight it out after the black sheep has been caught for the final place. If one of them didn't catch the black sheep of course," Astrid added, with a flick of a glance towards the game, where Alva finally scored a goal, with a whole lot of boasting accompanying it.

"Where's Siri?" Lennart squinted slightly as he failed to see the bright purple that was her Nadder. "I haven't seen her in a few minutes."

"I'm not sure," Hiccup said slowly, as he scanned the area for his daughter. "Maybe she's...WATCH OUT, SEER!" he suddenly roared as he located his daughter...just as the other boy, Ivar, rushed up behind the unsuspecting teenager, hammer held high. Hearing her father's yell, Siri quickly wheeled around, just in time to dodge having a hammer slammed into her face.

"FOUL!" Astrid screamed angrily towards Valka, who was also screaming angrily towards the boy. "THAT WASN'T CALLED FOR!"

"Plus it's not allowed in this age range," Kelda pointed out, with a shake of her head towards the boy. "He wasn't even supposed to have a weapon with him!"

"Well, it's cost him," Hiccup said, his heart constricting tightly at the near miss. He nodded to the boy, being screamed at by his mother on the ground. "He's disqualified."

"Serves him right," Leif and Lennart scoffed angrily, as Ivar sauntered off towards the stables. Cuffing his hands around his mouth, Lennart called after him. "CHEATER!"

"That's enough, Len," his mother warned him from behind.

"Well, it was," Snotlout pointed out, coming to his son's defence. "She didn't even have a sheep!" He turned towards Siri's direction. "FINISH THE GAME, SEER! SHOW THEM HOW TO PLAY!"

"SNOTLOUT'S RIGHT, SHOW THEM WHAT YOU CAN DO SEER!" Astrid screamed, causing the Vikings around her to stare at her in surprise, before they began to chant towards the eldest Haddock child.

"WIN THE GAME, WIN THE GAME, WIN THE GAME!"

"No pressure, huh girl?" Siri asked the Nadder in irritation, as the crowd around her increased in volume. "Let's give them what they want. Fly lower, Night Star."

Obliging her rider, the Nadder immediately dipped lower, peeling her eyes out for any sign of those elusive sheep, who had seemed to have vanished from sight.

"THERE!" Siri suddenly screamed, causing the dragon to startle slightly. She pointed towards Gerold, shooting towards a terrified looking sheep hiding behind a water trough. "GO, GIRL, GO!"

Shooting towards the older boy, Siri quickly caught up to the fourteen year old, with both of them heading towards each other in a collision course as they approached the nervous looking sheep.

"I'd back off if I were you!" Siri yelled towards him, as his eyes widened in fear at the possible collision. "Because I'm not doing it!"

"That's what they all say!" Gerold called back, undeterred, as he

urged his Monstrous Nightmare on.

"Oh crap, they're gonna crash!" Lennart exclaimed, wringing his hands as he watched the two riders.

"It's getting close!" Astrid bit her lip with worry, heart beating a million miles an hour.

"This is going to hurt!" Snotlout added with a nervous flinch.

"I'm not backing off!" Gerold exclaimed nervously, his fingers twitching on the saddle.

"Well, this is going to hurt then!" Siri said stubbornly, as the dragons came within inches of each other, looking set to become a collision course, before Gerold's brown eyes suddenly widened in fear, and just before both dragons crashed into each other, he and his dragon pulled up, allowing Night Star to snatch the petrified looking sheep from the ground.

"GO SIRI!" Anna and Astrid screamed in delight, as the thirteen year old landed the sheep into her goal. "NOW, \_THAT'S\_ HOW IT'S DONE!"

"The old bluff trick," Snotlout chuckled proudly, as he looked over towards Astrid. "She's your daughter, alright. She plays just like you!"

"She's just like her mother that one," Anna agreed with a smile, just as Siri was shooting past the stands, waiting for the black sheep to be released. Hearing this comment, though, Siri came to a grinding halt. She frowned.

After everything she did today, people \_still\_ compared her to her mother? Unbelievable! After thirteen years, \_this\_ is all people could say about her? How hard was it to step out of her mother's shadow already!

The sound of the horn blowing effectively snapped Siri's thoughts back to the present, and shaking her head to clear her thoughts, Siri quickly urged Night Star towards the black sheep, sailing lazily over their heads as it was released.

"Up, up, up, girl!" Siri urged the dragon as they inched closer and closer, only to be stopped midair as Sorsi grabbed hold of the woolly animal, who went charging towards the goals.

"Sorry, Seer, but this wool is mine!" she heard the girl call back to her with a laugh.

"Lucky break!" Siri called back to her friend's retreating back, as the fifteen year old triumphantly threw the unruffled sheep into her goal, calling to an end of the game.

"That's 13!" Valka announced proudly as the crowd erupted with cheers. "Sorsi has won the match with a score of 13 points, followed by Gerold and Siri on 3, and Alva on 1! These four young Vikings will now proceed to the next round!"

"GO SIRI!" Hiccup roared proudly, as Astrid, Lennart and the others

whistled loudly from beside him. "YOU SHOWED THEM, BABY!"

"Yay, Siwi!" Ingrid screamed, clapping her hands loudly from her brother's lap.

"That was awesome, Siri!" Sorsi said, as she and the others landed back on the ground. Getting off her dragon, Sorsi turned to Siri with a smile. "You know, for a newbie, you didn't do half bad." She held out her hand. "Welcome to dragon racing, Seer."

Siri smiled as she took the girl's hand to shake. "Thanks," she said. "I have to admit, that was pretty awesome. It's harder than it looks!"

"You were awesome," Gerold told her with a lopsided grin, which made Siri blush slightly despite herself. "Who knew you had that sort of play in you? You tricked me a few times!"

"That wouldn't be too hard," Sorsi said with a sly grin in her brother's direction, who looked back at her in annoyance.

"Hey!" he protested, before he turned his attention back to Siri. "Seriously, though, how did you learn to play like that?!" he asked incredulously. "It took me months to trick people like that!"

"Yeah, Seer, how did you figure that out?" Siri heard her father ask, as he and the others came up beside her. Standing next to her, he grinned. "I thought you said you wouldn't become as competitive as your mother and I?" he asked with a cheeky grin towards her.

"I...I never said that!" Siri protested quickly, her face flushing a deep red. "I only said I wouldn't act childish..."

"Actually, I believe the bet was that you wouldn't stoop to our level during the race," Astrid reminded her with a blank face. "Which meant no mocking or over competitive call outs throughout the race; and I don't know about you guys," she turned her attention to the others, "but I sure saw a lot of that."

"I did," Snotlout agreed with a smirk in Siri's direction. "Especially the old bluff trick."

"And," Anna cut in with a smile, "mocking the other players that they had no chance of beating you."

"But..." Siri stammered, "...but I was..." At a loss for words, she threw Gerold and Sorsi a pleading look. "Guys?" she asked hopefully.

"Sorry, Seer," Sorsi laughed. "But I saw you completely stoop to your parent's level."

"But..."

"Sorry, Siri, but I'm with your dad on this one," Gerold shrugged, much to Siri's annoyance. "I happen to recall you saying to us 'two can play at that game' Gerold quoted with a grin, "straight after you tricked us, and you mocked my sister; a lot."

Siri looked from both Gerold to her father, her mouth opening and

closing like a stunned fish for a minute, before it finally hit her. She had acted just like her parents.

"Well, sweetie, I believe you lost the bet," Hiccup grinned at her. He held out his hand.

"Oh, look at that," Siri hurriedly said, as she pretended to search her vest pockets. "I don't have any money on me."

"Typical," Hiccup chuckled. "But that just means you'll be doing both yours and Leif's chores for a week now."

"Really?" Leif asked, his eyes wide with glee. "Yes!" He turned to his sister with a wide grin. "Thanks, Seer."

Siri groaned, but couldn't help a small smile forming on her face. "You're welcome," she said with a slight giggle, before she glanced up to towards her father. "I'm never betting against you again," she said.

"Well, next time think before you bet and you won't be in this mess," Hiccup pointed out with a grin, before his face suddenly changed. "But seriously, sweetie," he added with a proud smile towards her, "you did great out there. We are so proud of you. Whether you lost the bet or what," he added with another grin.

"Gee, thanks," Siri said dryly, unable to stop a smile from spreading across her face as she looked up at her dad. "Thanks, daddy," she said as she placed her arms around his waist.

Hiccup kissed her windswept hair with a loving smile. "You played great out there today," he told her proudly. "I think we might have a new champion in the house."

"Really?" Siri's eyes lit up. "So..." she said slowly, looking up at her parents with a smug grin. "â€|Better than you two?"

"Don't get your hopes up, baby," Astrid chortled, as she brought her daughter in for a hug. "Your father and I have been playing for years." Siri's face began to fall. "But-" her mother amended quickly, seeing her daughter's expression, "-if today was anything to go by, I say you will before long." She sighed. "And soon by the looks of it."

"Too right, she will," Snotlout interjected with a smile towards the teenager. "You're going to become your mother playing like that!"

Siri's smile faded. "What do you mean by that?" she asked the Jorgenson patriarch.

Snotlout shrugged, unaware of Siri's irritation. "You're just like your mother, that's all," he explained. "A lot like your mother."

"That's for sure," Anna agreed with a nod, as they began to make their way towards the Great Hall. "You played just like her."

"That's for sure!" another Viking called out as they passed the

group. 'I thought I \_was \_watching Astrid!" He turned to Siri with a grin. "Good game, lass!" he said cheerfully, before he continued walking.

"Butâ€¦I'm not mumâ€¦" Siri protested weakly.

"By the looks of it, I'm going to be outdone by my daughter before long!" Astrid exclaimed with a laugh, unaware of her daughter's protest as they made their way up the Great Hall stairs. "I feel old."

"Maybe because you are old," Siri held Tuffnut respond with a snort.

"Well, what does that make youâ€¦?"

"Seer, are you alright?" Lennart's voice broke through the fog that was Siri's mind, startling her back to reality. She hadn't even noticed that she had come to a halt mid step.

Siri looked towards her parents, who had just entered the Great Hall, then back to her best friend with a loud sigh. "Did you hear them?" she asked, throwing her arm towards the group. "After \_everything \_I did today, they still think of me as a younger version of my mother!"

Lennart frowned. "So?" he asked, nonplussed. "They always have. It's just something adults do."

Siri threw him a frustrated look. "But I'm not my mother!" she exclaimed in irritation. "Why is it so hard for them to realise that!"

"Because they'll always compare us." Lennart sighed, before gesturing to his friend to sit down. "Look at me, Seer," he said as Siri turned her attention to him. "I'm compared to my mother every day. And your brother," he added quickly, as Siri went to retort. "He never goes a day without somebody saying he reminds them of your dad."

"But don't you find it annoying?" Siri asked him, folding her arms on her knees with a deep sigh. "I mean, I'm \_not \_my mother. How hard is it to show them that?" she threw her arms up in frustration, startling Lennart who had to duck to avoid being punched in the nose. "It's like ever since I chose Night Star for my dragon, people have compared me to her \_more. \_I can't even act like me without somebody seeing something of my mum in that." Siri stopped speaking as she looked out over at the village.

"Siri, they're \_always \_going to do that, no matter what you do," Lennart explained to the girl kindly. "You can't do anything about it. It's just the way things are."

Siri considered this for a moment. "It doesn't have to be, though," she pointed out, a thought suddenly crossing her face. She turned to Lennart. "What if I didn't act like my mother?" she asked him.

"Butâ€¦you just saidâ€¦"

"I'm not my mum," Siri agreed, seeing Lennart's bewildered

expression. "But there are still enough similarities for people to think\_ of me as herâ€|"

"Siri, you're not planning something stupid, are you?" Lennart asked her nervously, seeing the shadow of a plan begin to cross his friend's face. In response to the question, Siri turned to him with an enigmatic expression.

"No," she said. "But tomorrow, people will see I'm my \_own \_person. Whether they want to or not."

\* \* \*

><p><em>Sorry to leave it there guys, but if I didn't who knows how long this chapter would have been! So, as you can see, Siri is fed up with being compared to her mother and next chapter, she's going to try and get people to see her differently. This includes acting very different to how she really is and I can tell you know this won't go down well with Hiccup, who Siri is going to have a huge fight with next chapter. I have to say I'm looking forward to it. It's going to be very interesting. <em>

\_So, I'm also guessing a few people may have picked on the fact on a few things with Siri this chapter, and I am not going to reveal anything :p You'll just have to keep reading. But I said last chapter that Siri was growing up, and that is definitely starting to happen, if anybody caught something with her and a certain character this chapter ;) Next chapter, this will be shown a little more. Also, yes, as you can tell Anna and Snotlout are expecting their 4th, and luckily final child. \_

\_I hope you all liked the dragon racing competition. I had to change it up a bit, but I think it's worked out. I'd had a few people asking me for it, so I was glad to have being able to write it. It was so much fun I assure you!\_

\_Ok, so, \_\_\*\*DON'T FORGET TO REVIEW! Just remember like usual though, that NO FLAMES WILL BE TOLERATED, but KIND constructive criticism is accepted. \*\*\_

\_Thanks for reading :D\_

### 37. Chapter 37: Change of Plan

\_Hi guys, I am SO sorry for the long wait, but unfortunately it couldn't be helped. The week I planned to start the chapter we had a storm that was equivalent a category two cyclone/hurricane, although it wasn't actually one, that cut power for days on end so I was delayed in starting, then I started getting a lot of casual work at schools and when I got home I was too drained to write. I'm sorry!

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\_Ok, so, despite the length of time it took, you will be happy to know that the next TWO chapters are completed. This storyline ended up being HUGE and had more to it than first planned, so I decided to write the whole thing and then split it into two parts, so the next part should be up soon. It's still being edited. I just didn't want you to wait any longer. Even though this chapter probably isn't as long as you all hoped, it's just this was the best area to split it

unfortunately. \_

\_Alright so this chapter deals with Siri changing tactics to try to stop people comparing her to her mother, but things don't go to plan as well as she hoped! The games are not the same as last chapter as I have changed the scene and styles of play to keep it interesting. But I assure you this is all needed as it is important to the storyline to see Siri's changes and setbacks. It may seem like I'm repeating myself I'll admit, but you need to see the progression Siri makes throughout the games as the way she acts will be an important factor in a future storyline, so please bare with it! \_

\_Now, on with the chapter!\_

\_By the way there's an instance in here where Len reminds me of Astrid in one episode of dragons. That was completely intentional!\_

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<p><span>Chapter 37 " Change of Plan<span>

\* \* \*

<p>"Mum, have you seen my vest?!"<p>

"Try your room where you always leave it!"

"It's not there!"

"It'll be here, Seer, calm down."

Siri groaned as she dumped a pile of laundry back onto the couch. "I had it right here," she said, pointing to one spot on the wooden couch. "It can't have just vanished!" She picked up a pile of clothes with a look of disgust on her face. "Of course with this mess anything is possible," she added with a sigh.

"Well it isn't my mess," Astrid said. "I cleaned this up just yesterday. Well, I \_thought\_ I did\_,\_" she added with an accusatory glance towards her son, sitting at the kitchen table. Seeing his mother and sister's glances, he frowned.

"What?" he asked with a shrug. "I didn't touch it."

Siri growled in annoyance. "Well, it's got to be somewhere!" she exclaimed heatedly, picking up another pile of her brother's clothes which littered the living room. "Gods you're a slob, Leif!"

"Yeah, well at least I can find \_my\_ clothes," Leif grinned as he watched his sister's vain attempts at finding her vest, making her huff in annoyance once again.

"Calm down, Seer," she heard her mother say, as she buried her head beside the couch. "We'll find it before we leave. It's not the end of the world."

"I know," Siri said quietly as she emerged from beside the couch. "I...I just want to be ready is all."



Hearing the pause in her daughter's comment, Astrid's brows furrowed. "Seer, is something wrong? You've been acting funny since we got home yesterday."

"I just want to be ready, that's all," Siri replied quickly, not quite meeting her mother's eyes. She bit her lip. "Actually, mum, there's something-"

"I found it!"

Startled, Siri whirled towards the loud exclamation to find her father holding up a familiar looking vest in triumph, his eyebrows raised in amusement.

"For someone so desperate to find her vest, you certainly didn't look very hard," Hiccup chuckled, holding out the item of clothing for his daughter to take. "Because what did I find as soon as I walked into your room? Midnight using it as a warm bed."

Siri flushed bright red as her mother and siblings began to chuckle with laughter behind her.

"Well...how was I supposed to know it was there?!" Siri stuttered, as she put the vest on. "I didn't put it there!"

"You probably didn't," Hiccup agreed with a chuckle, seeing his daughter's flushed face. "Terrors are known to take clothing to sleep on, though, so you should probably remember that. Which is why you shouldn't leave your clothes around either, buddy," he added with a grin towards his son. "Because I also happened to find your vest with Mossy," Hiccup said, holding up another vest for his son to see. Leif smiled sheepishly.

"Oops," the seven year said with a grin.

"Oops is right, you little mess maker," Hiccup chortled, launching toward his son, who gave a squeak of delight as his father caught him around the waist, tickling his side relentlessly, making the young boy squeal with laughter, before Ingrid joined in with her father and brother.

"So, were you saying something earlier?" Astrid asked her daughter over the noise. "Was there something you wanted to tell me?"

Siri looked at her mother nervously, before she gave a nod.

"Mum...everyone-"

The sound of a horn blowing in the distance effectively cut off Siri's comment, causing her to clench her hands in irritation as her mother's attention immediately focussed on the sound.

"Is that the time?!" she exclaimed frantically as she leapt to her feet. "We're late!"

"They can't start until everyone's there," Hiccup chuckled as he got to his feet. "But they're going to be annoyed if we keep them waiting." He turned to the two younger kids. "Come on, we better get going," he said, holding out his hand for Ingrid, who cheerfully took it.

"Mum...our talk?" Siri asked her mother hopefully, who glanced down at her daughter with an apologetic glance.

"I'm sorry, sweetie, we don't have time," she said gently as she ushered the kids out the door. "Can it wait until later?"

Siri sighed. "Yeah, I guess," she said. "It will have too, won't it?" she added in undertone, slight annoyance emanating through her body as she walked out the door behind her mother, where she ran smack bang into Lennart, waiting just outside the door.

"Oh, sorry Len," she said absently, making her friend frown slightly.

"Are you ok, Seer?" he asked her worriedly. "You don't look very happy." He frowned again. "Don't tell me you're still mad over what they said yesterday?"

"No." Lennart raised his eyebrows, making Siri sigh. "Well, yes," she admitted, "but that's not what I'm annoyed at. I tried to talk to mum about it, but we kept getting interrupted," she huffed.

"Well, that's not her fault," the twelve year old pointed out patiently. "You'll be able to talk to her later."

Siri shrugged. "What's the point?" she asked. "It's not like she'll understand anyway. You don't."

"I do understand, I just don't get why you're so worked up over it," Lennart replied with a slight grimace. "I thought it would be an honour to be compared to your mum-"

"It used to be," Siri admitted quietly, "but now that's all people say when they talk about me. That's like Astrid, that reminds me of her mother, oh wow, she's her mother's daughter all right." She sighed in annoyance. "That's all I ever hear!"

"Please don't tell me you're still going ahead with that silly plan of yours?" Lennart asked her nervously as he saw a look of determination cross his best friend's face. "You can't change who you are."

"I'm not changing who I am," Siri said with a glance towards her mother, walking ahead with her little sister. "I'm just changing tactics a little, that's all."

Lennart groaned. "You're going to go ahead with this no matter what I say to you, aren't you?" he asked her.

"Pretty much, yeah," Siri confirmed with a slight grin twitching at her lips.

Lennart sighed. "Well, just don't do anything stupid, will you?" he begged her. "This doesn't seem to be worth all the trouble."

"Yeah, well of course you wouldn't," Siri scoffed slightly, as her father turned his attention back to the two teenagers.

"Seer, your mother and I are going to head off to get ready," Hiccup told her as she and Lennart caught up with him. "So, if we don't see

you before your race, we just want to wish you good luck." He smiled proudly at her. "Of course, with the way you played yesterday, you won't need any luck. You'll easily win playing like that. That was some good play yesterday."

Siri smiled hopefully. "Really?" she asked him.

"Really," Hiccup answered her with a smile. He messed up her hair up a little, making her head band slip past her eyes. "You played so much like your mother it would have been hard\_ not\_ to win."

Siri's smile faded. "Is that all you thought while watching me?" she asked her father, irritation gnawing at her insides as she watched her parent's smiles.

"Well, that and how much you looked like your mother too." Hiccup tapped his daughter's head band with a wide grin.

"But how did \_I \_play?" Siri persisted, flicking her eyes between the two of. "Surely I did something that was different to mum?"

Hiccup frowned, thinking. "Well, yeah," he said slowly, "but-

"Hiccup, we're wanted at the arena," came Annika's impatient voice from behind them. "Your mother wants to get started."

"We better go," Astrid said quickly as she kissed her youngest daughter's cheek, before passing her over to Anna; before she bent down to peck her eldest daughter's cheek with a reassured smile. "You'll play just fine, sweetheart. Don't worry about how you played yesterday if that's what you're worried about. Good luck!"

"But...that wasn't what I was-" Siri started, but it fell on deaf ears as her parents quickly rushed off towards the arena, with nothing but a quick wave. Huffing angrily like a winded Gronkle, Siri kicked the dirt a few times before she dug up a small pebble. Siri's rage overtook her at this point and kicked the pebble so hard that she could still hear it bouncing around well after it rebounded off an old oak with a resounding \_thud\_.

"Whoa, what did that rock ever do to you?" Lennart half joked, but his smile faded slightly seeing the annoyed look cross his friend's face. Seeing Lennart's nervous look, though, Siri smiled slightly.

"It was better than yelling at someone," she replied with a chuckle, as she threw another pebble towards the same tree as they approached the grandstands, loud with excited energy. "I just can't believe they thought I was worried about how I \_played\_." She sighed. "I'm\_ really\_ going to have to change tactics."

"Or you could leave it and accept that you'll always be compared to your parents?" Lennart suggested. Siri threw him an exasperated look. He sighed. "Yeah, I didn't think so," he muttered, as the horn sounded for the beginning of the first round and Siri's attention immediately went to the game in front of her, where her mother charged straight for an unsuspecting sheep without a second glance behind her.

"Is that how I played yesterday?" Siri asked Anna, who turned her attention towards the girl with a smile.

"When you got into it, yes," Anna replied with a nod. She smiled. "Why do you think we thought we were watching your mother play?!"

"Yeah...right," Siri said indignantly, before turning her attention back to the game in front of her. Her mother was all she could focus on, as her eyes followed Stormflys' azure scales as they darted around the course. One sheep, two sheep fell lazily into Astrid's basket in the blink of an eye. While Siri could barely keep her eyes off her mother, the competition between the rest of her mothers' peer group was fierce. By the end of the tenth lap the scores stood as Hiccup, Astrid and Annika tied with 3 with Fishlegs trailing with a single hard-won sheep. As the black sheep was released, Siri's tunnel vision only grew stronger. Her eyes broke from her mothers' figure for a second to watch as the black sheep soared gracefully "well, as gracefully as a sheep can fly" into the sky, only for Stormfly's talons quickly closing around the sheep and her tunnel vision returned. Being harassed only by Toothless in the final stretch "a half-hearted attempt by Hiccup to show off" Astrid blitzed the black sheep into her basket. One final lap to break the tie between Annika and Hiccup was held, with Hiccup winning, leaving the final scores at Astrid with 13, Hiccup 4, Annika 3, and Fishlegs trailing with 1. Watching her mother play throughout, Siri took a mental of her mother's form of play in an effort to avoid playing the same. There was no way she was being compared to her again today if the teenage could help it.

The rest of the days' races proceeded without much interruption, which, for Vikings, was highly unusual; the only exceptions being an exceptionally fat Gronkle becoming stuck in a basket as it had attempted to deliver a sheep and a case of foul play in the early 20s group where one rider had secreted fish parts onto another riders' Monstrous Nightmare, whereupon in the final lap a horde of Terrible Terrors descended on the baffled Nightmare, practically knocking it out of the sky in the swarm of tiny, voracious dragons, much to Valka's anger. Play had to be stalled for several minutes as a suitable punishment was sought for the offending player, before play could resume.

The fifth round succeeding it seemed to be a lot tamer than the rest of the games proceeding it that day, much to the displeasure of the two younger Jorgenson boys, who were hoping for more of an interesting round, which they voiced quite loudly as the game began to move into its final stages.

"This is boring," Sigmund huffed as he dropped back into his seat. "The other games were cooler than this."

"Too many rulessssss," four year old Bjorn drawled as he slumped into his seat beside his brother.

Opening her mouth to argue with the boys, Siri's attention was diverted by a frantic wave off to the side of her peripheral vision, and turning her gaze to the side, she saw it was Sorsi down on the ground waving frantically towards her. Seeing she had the thirteen years olds attention, she gestured violently to the stables which

Siri took to mean it was time to get ready.

"I better go," she chuckled. "Sorsi looks like she'll burst if I don't get down there." She turned her attention back to the others as she stood up. "Wish me luck. She frowned thoughtfully. "Again."

"You'll do just fine, dear," Anna assured her with a smile. Standing up she gave the girl a quick embrace. "Just play like you did yesterday and you can't go wrong!"

"She won't lose," Fishlegs said gently as he threw a smile towards the young girl. "She's just like her mother, aren't you Seer?"

"Yeah...sure," Siri replied with a tiny smile, before she turned to leave, only to be stopped by the feel of Lennart's hand gently being placed on her forearm.

"Don't try to be someone you're not," he relayed quietly in her ear. "Play like you want too."

"I will," Siri said absently, giving him a swift smile, before she squeezed herself through the seats down to the stairs, leaving Lennart sighing loudly in her wake.

"Yeah, sure, don't listen to me, it's not like I have anything interesting to say," he grumbled as he plopped back into his seat.

Anna frowned as she heard her son's voice. "Are you talking to yourself, Len?" she asked him, perplexed.

Lennart sighed. "No mum," he said. "Although I might as well be," he added to himself as his mother looked away. With a groan, Lennart quickly turning his attention back to his friend, now approaching the stables at a run, and shook his head. He wasn't sure what that girl had planned, and if he was being honest with himself, he wasn't sure he actually wanted to know. In his opinion, Siri was overreacting; all adults compared children to someone, it was only natural. But of course, she didn't think that, and Lennart knew experience that Haddocks were stubborn as rocks, so once Siri had something in mind, nothing would change it.

Yep, Lennart thought, this was going to be a long match.

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Racing down to the stables, Siri almost skidded to a halt when she arrived in an effort to avoid a collision with Sorsi, Gerold and Alva, standing just outside the doors. Seeing her approach, Sorsi raised her brows at her.

"Did you forget you were playing today or something?" the fifteen year old chuckled, seeing Siri's heaving chest. "We were down here ages ago!"

"Sorry, got caught up," Siri panted, as Night Star came up beside her rider. "Are the others finished yet?" Standing on tip toes, she tried to see the game being played, but to no avail. Even at her height, she was still too short.

"No, they've been delayed," Sorsi sighed, shaking her head. "One of the players rammed another out of the sky and they've broken their arm. Your mother was shouting her head off at them the last time I checked."

"Are they alright?" Siri asked, concerned, standing on her tip toes again in an effort to see the commotion.

"They're alright, but your Grandmother has certainly had enough of it," Gobber chuckled as he approached the tiny group, throwing Siri a toothy grin. "She's shouted herself so hoarse that your mother is taking over the referee duties for today. I've never heard her yell that much!"

Siri giggled. "Neither have I," she confessed as she glanced over towards the blacksmith. "So, what happened?" she asked him curiously. "I thought this age group were the tame ones?"

"They were until someone annoyed one of them," Gobber explained to the girl with a sigh. "Now it's all-out war." He shook his head, before throwing another smile towards Siri. "Well, let's just hope you don't play \_too \_much like your mum today Seer, or your grandmother will never get her voice back!" Gobber chortled cheerfully as he looked over at Siri, who frowned towards the older Viking.

"What's that supposed to mean?" she asked heatedly, as she heard her mother announce the last match of the day in the background.

Gobber shrugged, his grin unwavering despite the girl's tone. "I mean don't play too hard, lass, or we'll have another accident! Try to keep it a clean game, huh?" He gave her a wink.

"Well, no promises here," Sorsi chuckled as Siri went to retort. Turning her attention to the other three, she gestured to them to follow her. "You guys coming or not?"

"Show us what you can, Seer!" Gobber exclaimed cheerfully as Siri followed the older girl in a huff.

"Are you alright, Seer?" she heard Gerold ask. Turning her head towards him, she saw a look of concern come across his face. "You look as if you're ready to hit something," he said uneasily. "Was it something that Gobber said?"

"I'm fine," Siri cut in shortly, as she urged Night Storm to the starting position as an effort to control herself. "Let's just get ready."

"You're not fine," Gerold replied stubbornly, turning his head back to the blacksmith with a frown. "What did Gobber say that annoyed you so much?"

"Would you two stop whispering and focus?!" Sorsi hissed at them. "Astrid's about to start the match!"

"But-" Gerold started, only to be cut off by Siri.

"Forget it. Let's just play," she said snappishly, as she readied

herself to play, which made Night Star squawk nervously, having felt the tension in her rider. Taking note of this, Gerold frowned slightly, but was unable to say anything further as he heard Astrid's voice call out.

"Riders at the ready!"

Crouching low on her dragon, Siri threw a quick glance into the crowd where she saw Lennart giving her an encouraging wave, allowing for a small smile to tug at her lips, before it swiftly vanished as she saw a few Vikings point between her and her mother. She sighed. If that was how they wanted to play it, she thought quietly as she watched her mother slowly raise the red flag.

"Get set... and... go!"

The flag dropped and as the sound of the horn echoed in the air, four dragons swiftly shot up into the sky and past each other before the other players could barely blink. Siri felt her braided hair get caught in the wind and slap at the back of her head as she streaked past Alva, scanning the area below for that first sheep, easily overtaking her in the process.

"GO SIRI!" she heard her father scream from nearby, and turning her head around, she saw him standing in the bleachers with the others. "PLAY IT LIKE YOU MEAN IT!"

Urging Night Star on, Siri frantically scanned the area below her for the hidden sheep, only to watch Sorsi sweep down gracefully on her aqua Monstrous Nightmare, plucking the sheep from the ground and turning back towards her goal. Chasing after her, Siri flew her Nadder up over the older girl, preparing to swoop down from above in a sneak attack.

"That's a girl, Seer!" Gobber yelled cheerfully from the ground. "Just like your mother!"

Siri came to a dead halt, her stomach bubbling with slight anger immediately attracting the attention of the crowd, as well as Sorsi, who looked back at the girl in confusion as she heard the mutterings of the crowd, all the while making her approach towards the baskets.

"What the heck is she doing?" Snotlout exclaimed, throwing his hands up in frustration. "She's letting Sorsi get away!" Cupping his hands around his mouth, he yelled out in Siri's direction. "That's not how this game is played, Seer!"

"Get going, Seer, she's going to score!" Hiccup yelled anxiously, as he looked around the bewildered crowd. "What are you doing?!"

Darting past Siri, Sorsi shot Siri a weird look as the girl came up behind her.

"WHY DIDN'T YOU TAKE THAT?!" Sorsi yelled towards Siri. "YOU WOULD HAVE HAD ME FAIR AND SQUARE!"

Sorsis' yelling was largely drowned in the wind, but Siri still heard, and, despite not answering, Sorsi saw Siri's sullen face.

Reading some message there, Sorsi shot off towards the baskets with a shake of her head. Seeing an advantage, though, Siri quickly urged Night Star to catch up with Sorsi, who was rounding the corner before the baskets and finish line, when Siri swiftly cut off Sorsi's path, startling her and her dragon, before dropping the sheep; straight into Siri's waiting arms as it was about to hit the ground, neatly popping over the edge of the finish line and baskets, and depositing the sheep in her basket, before anyone knew what had happened.

"What was that?!" Hiccup exclaimed in astonishment as his brain finally caught up to his eyes. "That was the best move I've ever seen!" He turned in Siri's direction with a wide grin spreading across his lips. "That's my girl!"

"Was that planned?" Fishlegs wondered, watching as Siri took off for the next lap. "Because to me it was too hard to tell! I mean-" he turned his attention to Hiccup, with a slight furrow of his brows, "-one minute she was all ready for a sneak attack and the next..." he trailed off, dumbfounded, making Hiccup, Snotlout and Anna all shrug in response.

"It was like she was luring Sorsi into a false sense of security or something," Snotlout said tentatively as he watched the game in front of him. "But where did she learn it?"

"I think I might have an idea," Anna said, throwing a deliberate grin in Hiccup's direction, who just gave a bashful grin in return, before returning his attention to the game where Sorsi had just landed her first sheep, Siri and Gerold hot on her heels.

Watching Sorsi land her goal, Siri's gaze turned sharply towards the ground once more, scanning her eyes wildly for another sheep, and spotting one, she took off quickly towards it, just as Gerold noticed at the same time. Coming up alongside her, he threw her a playful wink, before shooting off towards his target, leaving Siri in the dust. Realising his motive, Siri's eyes narrowed as she looked around for another angle, and spotting it, she wordlessly pointed to the other side of the water tower coming up ahead of her.

"Go round girl, let's see if we can trick him," she urged the Nadder, who gave a loud squawk of agreement, before turning sharply around the water tower, then diving headlong towards an unsuspecting Gerold as he made a grab for the nervous looking sheep, only looking up as he suddenly spotted a flash of purple of the corner of his eye.

"What in the name of Thor-?!" he screeched, as Siri and Night Star undertook a sloppy barrel roll manoeuvre where Siri stretched out her hand towards the cowering sheep, before taking it right before Gerold's disbelieving eyes.

"I have no idea what she's doing today, but it seems to be working!" Hiccup exclaimed, clapping wildly as his daughter landed her second goal of the round. "GO SIRI!"

"Go big sis, you're kicking their butts!" Leif screamed out cheerfully, as he held onto his sister tightly who was wiggling around his lap animatedly as she watched the older girl play. "Ow, be careful Ingrid, you're hurting me," he added, wincing.



"Go Siwi!" Ingrid exclaimed happily, as she clapped loudly, ignoring the pleas of her brother.

Hiccup chuckled. "Come here, sweetie, let's give your brother a break," he told her gently, holding out his arms to her, before placing her in his own lap, just as a collective gasp rang out in unison around the stands.

"What just happened?" he asked, wheeling his head back around, eyes scanning the area for his daughter, who seemed to be shaking her head in the direction of Gerold, flying off in the other direction.

"Gerold just scored," Lennart said, his voice tinged with annoyance. "Knocked straight into Siri mid-air before she scored. After \_she\_ stole it from \_him\_, stealing it from \_Sorsi\_."

"Just another day of dragon racing in my opinion," Hiccup chuckled.

Adrenaline pumping, Siri rounded a corner, hot on Gerold's tail, who was frantically scanning for the next sheep when a devious thought filled the Haddock girl's brain. Spotting some white cloth flapping in the breeze, Siri bee lined to it, grabbed it, and bundled it up into a tight ball.

"Hold on to this, Night Star."

Chirping and cocking her head to one side, the dragon did as her rider asked her, although the dragon didn't quite follow. The shadows of the other dragon riders flitted through the area as they still searched for another sheep – obviously, none had been found yet, and Siri could not be seen from the stands where she was at the moment. With a hop-skip-and-a-jump, Night Star took to the air, staying back and below the group of other dragon riders; and with a short, sharp whisper of "Go!", Night Star shot through the group, rounding the next corner so hard that a window flew open on a nearby house. Siri's plan had worked; the other dragon riders were slowly gaining on her and her 'sheep'. Entering a zig-zag section of housing, she brought her dragon close to the ground; at the end of the zig-zag the houses split in a Y shape. Faking losing control of Night Star partway along the track, right as a blue Monstrous Nightmare Head came level with her eyes, Siri leaned closer to Night Star's head.

"Drop!" she exclaimed in what was almost a sing-song tone.

The bundle of white fabric hit the ground and rolled down one side of the Y, Siri banking to the other as she saw the back end of a sheep poking out from between two houses – this sheep was the real deal, and it was as real as anything up in the air and away within a few seconds, a few blades of grass lingering in its mouth. Siri looked back over her shoulder to what carnage had unfolded down the other lane; no-one was seriously hurt and all were already back up in the air but were well behind Siri as she made a run for the baskets and finish line, where she dumped the bewildered creature into her basket. The crowd around her was so silent it was deafening as they gawked at her in astonishment, causing a faint flush to begin rising in the young girl's cheeks in embarrassment as hundreds of eyes bore into the back of her head.

Finally, a roar broke out in the grandstands around them.

"That," Lennart said, his face breaking into a wide grin, "was totally awesome!"

"How in the name of Thor did she come up with that?!" Annika exclaimed, thunderstruck, as she turned her gaze upon Hiccup, gazing down at his daughter in astonishment. "The only other time I've ever seen a trick like that was from you, Hiccup! And that was long before Siri was even born!" she added, with a quick glance down at the game where Gerold had just landed another sheep in his basket, with Siri hot on his trail.

Hiccup raised one eyebrow in amusement. "You think I know how she came to know that trick?" he asked with a slight grin. "Because I certainly didn't teach it to her! I didn't think that's how she wanted to play!"

"I don't get it," Snotlout said, flabbergasted. "Yesterday she played like her mother, but today she's been more like you-" He glanced towards Hiccup with a shake of his head. "I don't think she knows herself how to play!"

"Or she just wanted to try something different out," Lennart cut in, a tinge of annoyance in his tone.

"Maybe," Snotlout said, dismissively. "But either way, she's one heck of a player!"

"And that's lap 9 completed folks!" Astrid suddenly called out elatedly as she watched her daughter land another unsuspecting sheep into its basket. "With one lap to go the scores are as follows; Siri with 4, Gerold with 3, Sorsi with 2 and Alva with 1. Once this sheep is caught, the black sheep will be let lose! Who will the top 2 be?!"

"GO SIRI!" Leif, Lennart and Hiccup screeched from their seats as they watched her and Gerold fly neck and neck towards a lone sheep by a feeding station, causing the rest of the group to join in the cheering.

"SIRI, SIRI, SIRI!"

Bright red with excitement, Siri couldn't help a slight smile from tugging at her lips as she heard her name being called out. The level of the roars was deafening as Siri descended down onto the oblivious sheep, her eyes wary of Gerold coming in beside her, before she stretched out her hand towards the woolly creature, only to be jerked to the side as she suddenly rammed into, causing Night Star to squawk angrily at the figure beside her.

"Sorry, Seer, but I win this lap!" was all Siri heard as she righted herself once more onto her dragon. Wheeling her head angrily towards the young man, all Siri saw before he landed the sheep into his basket was his cheeky grin thrown back at her, making her bubble in anger and blush at the same time. She shook her head. That was weird.

A roar went up across the grandstand as the horn suddenly sounded,

snapping Siri back into reality as she watched the black sheep sailing coolly across the arena.

"Go Night Star, go!" she screeched loudly, as the Nadder shot up towards the creature as quick as her wings could carry her, Siri hanging on for dear life on the saddle above. Looking back, Siri felt a twinge of panic erupt in her stomach as she saw Sorsi gaining on her as quick as lightning, with Gerold not far behind. As the black sheep began to fall, though, Siri reacted quickly.

"Dive girl!"

Banking suddenly, Siri effectively left Sorsi and Gerold in the dust as the siblings failed to stop in time as they approached the baskets, leading to one all mighty crash the two teenagers crashed into the baskets with Sorsi slipping off her Monstrous Nightmare into her own basket along with the two sheep she had caught earlier, just as Night Star's talons closed over the black sheep's. The game was over.

"And it's all over!" Astrid squealed. "Siri has caught the black sheep and wins the round with 14 points, followed by Gerold on 3, Sorsi with 2 and Alva with 1, which means Siri and Gerold will now go head to head tomorrow to determine a winner!"

"GO SIRI!" Lennart yelled out to her, a grin spreading across his face from ear to ear. He turned to Hiccup quickly. "Sir, can we go down and see her?" he asked the Chief quickly, who nodded with a wide smile of his own.

"Sure Len, come on," Hiccup said, as he placed an arm around the young boy's shoulders, before squeezing his way through the crowded seats in order to get to the arena as the chants of 'SIRI!' as well as 'GEROLD!' roared around the arena.

Grinning like an idiot, Siri jumped off Night Star, with a quick pat to the dragon's head just as she heard Sorsi and Gerold's voices coming up behind her.

"That was awesome, Siri, totally awesome!" Gerold exclaimed, his face bright red with excitement. "How in Thor's name did you think of that trick?! You completely fooled us!"

"Well, that was the idea," Siri grinned as she turned her attention to Sorsi, who was picking bits and pieces of debris from her hair. "Are you alright?" she asked the older girl. "I didn't mean to send you into the baskets."

"Are you kidding, I wish I'd thought of that," Gerold snickered as he watched his sister pick a piece of wool from her vest. Hearing her brother's comment, though, she lured at him like an agitated dragon and he chuckled nervously, before going quiet. Sighing loudly, she turned to Siri.

"I'm alright," she replied. "I just smell like sheep butt that's all," she added with a grimace at the smell wafting from her vest. "This is going to take ages to come out." Hearing her brother snicker beside her, she glared at him again. "Not one word out of you." Gerold bit his lip, making Siri suddenly snort with laughter herself despite herself, before Sorsi suddenly turned her attention back to

the Haddock girl.

"What happened out there today, by the way?" she asked Siri curiously. "That was nothing like how you played yesterday and newbie or not, most people don't change strategies \_that \_quickly."

Siri bit her lip slightly before she shrugged slightly. "I don't know," she said, reaching up to tuck a piece of hair behind her ear. "I just...wanted to do something different that's all."

Sorsi frowned, as did Gerold, who suddenly recalled the conversation between Gobber and Siri earlier on.

"I don't believe that," Sorsi said with a perplexed glance towards the girl. "You played just fine yesterday, so what was with the tactic change?"

"It was nothing," Siri insisted, although her face was beginning to burn as she continued to lie through her teeth. "I just wanted to do something different, that's all..."

"Did it have something to do with that thing with Gobber earlier?" Gerold cut in, before Siri could continue.

Looking from her brother to her friend, Sorsi frowned. "What thing with...?" she started before a loud cheer from behind interrupted them.

"That was amazing Siri!" Lennart exclaimed proudly as Siri turned around. "That thing with the sheep? Totally awesome!" He grinned at her. "How'd you think of that?"

"I don't know," Siri admitted with a slight smile, as Lennart gave her a swift hug. "It just...came to me that's all."

"Well, it was brilliant, that's for sure," Hiccup cut in from behind Lennart. He beamed proudly at his daughter as she looked up at him over Lennart's head. "Congratulations sweetie, you did a great job."

"I'll say," Astrid said as she came up towards them, Valka and Gobber in tow. Approaching Siri, she beamed widely towards her. "You did amazing, Seer, congratulations," she said proudly, bending down to embrace her daughter. "I wish \_I'd \_thought of that at some point," she admitted, a little enviously.

"Not many people \_could\_ think of something like that on the spot," Valka said, her voice slightly raspy as she spoke. She smiled towards her eldest grandchild. "That was a good way of thinking, dear, I'm proud of you."

Flushed with pleasure, Siri beamed. "Thanks," she said cheerfully, as she looked around at the group around her. "I just wish \_I\_ knew how I came up with that," she giggled. "I mean-" She turned her gaze to a lone sheep, watching them cautiously nearby. "-I just saw a sheep and the idea just popped into my head!"

"Just like your father," Gobber said with a knowing grin towards the girl. "He did a similar play when he was younger, so it's little wonder that you came up with something like that!"

Siri's smile dropped from her face faster than a stone.

"That's where I recognised the play from!" Fishlegs exclaimed loudly, as he slapped his head lightly. "I thought the way Siri played reminded me of \_something\_."

"Looks like we have a bit of her father in her after all," Snotlout chuckled, making Siri's ears burn red as her stomach began to bubble with anger. "Obviously she's just like both of you," he added with a grin towards Hiccup and Astrid.

"More like her father today," Annika smiled.

\_More like her father today. \_The words echoed in Siri's head as soon as they were uttered, causing her stomach to boil with anger. Her smile completely faded from her face, she felt her ears begin to burn hot, which quickly spread to her face, then down her neck, as the other around her began to talk loudly in agreement with Annika's words. Beside her, she saw Lennart's smile fade slightly as he stole a glance towards his friend, his face turning to dismay as he saw the look of anger spreading quickly to Siri's eyes.

"Don't react, Seer," he whispered to her urgently, but it fell on deaf ears when she turned on her heel, and looked up at her parents with a look of annoyance spreading across her face.

"What do you mean, I'm like dad?" she asked heatedly, although her voice was calm. "I thought that play was different?"

"It was," Astrid said with a small smile, oblivious to her daughter's frustration. "But you have to admit the similarities to dad are pretty obvious!"

"I'll say," Anna said, as Siri opened her mouth to argue. Hearing Anna begin to speak though, Siri closed her mouth, biting her lip in silent anger. "I can't wait to see what she has in store tomorrow!"

"I can't wait to see what \_everyone\_ has in store for us tomorrow!" Hiccup exclaimed enthusiastically, as he made a move towards the Great Hall. "Tomorrow's matches are going to be insane!" Turning his head towards his daughter, he threw her a wide grin. "We're going up to the Great Hall, sweetie, meet us there when you're ready, alright?"

"Sure, whatever," Siri replied, through clenched teeth, as Hiccup nodded to her with a slight smile before making his way up to the Great Hall, Astrid and the others in tow. As soon as they were out of sight, Siri made a low growl deep in her throat, before snatching up a rock from the ground and hurling it over her friend's surprised heads, her face red with anger.

"You wanted to know why I was annoyed earlier?" she said to Gerold, who was standing frozen on the spot as she brandished her hand towards the Great Hall, where Hiccup and the others had just disappeared too. "Well, that's why!" Her face reddened slightly as she threw her hands up. "Obviously no matter what I do, I'm always going to be compared to one of them! I'll never be my own person! Noooo," she drawled angrily, making Lennart beside her flinch.

"That's too hard to ask!"

Despite the nervousness he felt, Lennart cautiously held out a hand to Siri's shoulder. "Seer," he said evenly, watching as his friend's shoulder stiffened at his touch, "don't worry about it. You saw how they reacted. It doesn't matter what you do, they'll always think of you as being like one of them. You just have to accept it."

"Why should I?!" She jerked free of his hand, making him pull away nervously. "I'm thirteen years old and the last time I checked I wasn't my mum and dad!"

"Is that what this is all about?" Sorsi cut in, her pale brows raised in surprise. "You're annoyed because your parents don't think of you as your own person?" She snorted. "Seer that will never happen the way you're going about it!"

"How would you know?" Siri asked, her voice still tinged with annoyance, yet slightly calmer.

"Because \_I've \_been through it," Sorsi explained to her patiently. She looked over at Gerold. "Gerold has too."

"I'll say," the boy muttered.

"The point is," Sorsi continued, "is that just changing how you act isn't going to cut it. If you want any hope of people thinking about you differently, you have to act completely different to how you usually do..."

"That's what I did!" Siri protested.

"No, you just changed tactics," Gerold pointed out kindly. "You have to do act in a way that is so unlike you for anyone to notice the change."

Lennart frowned. "But," he said slowly, throwing a quick glance to Siri, "wouldn't that beat the purpose of them seeing her for...well...her?" he asked.

Sorsi shook her head. "You don't do it forever," she explained, as she threw Siri a reassured glance. "You just act so different for a while that people start to see you as who you are, and then," she added quickly, seeing Siri was about to protest, "you begin to act like yourself again and they don't see the changes. Worked for us," she said with a nod to her brother.

"So... how would \_you g\_o about it?" Siri asked Gerold, who gave her a tiny dimpled smile, making her redden slightly.

"Well for one, play rough," Gerold said. "Try to shock everyone that you can play hard. You're only against me tomorrow, so try to knock me into the baskets again, or barge into me when you can, that sort of thing..."

"That's stupid," Lennart scoffed, his eyes narrowing in suspicion towards the older boy. He turned to his friend with pleading eyes. "Forget it, Siri; it's not a good idea. It's not you..."

"That's the whole point of it, though, Lennart," Sorsi pointed out

gently. "Look, I know you're just trying to help Siri," she added as the oldest Jorgenson boy as he frowned in her direction. "But this is the only way she has any hope of getting people to notice her for...well...her."

"I guess, but..."

"I'm going to try it," Siri said.

Lennart looked at her worriedly. "Are you sure?" he asked her, hesitantly. "I mean...I think this is a stupid idea to begin with. You're \_overreacting\_."

"Says the kid who isn't bothered by it obviously," Sorsi said dryly, making him frown peevishly towards her.

Siri sighed as she glanced over towards her friend. "I'm doing it, Len, whether you like it or not. I'm sick of being compared to them."

Lennart sighed deeply. "Well, it's not like I've been able to stop you before," he said.

Siri smiled at him gratefully. "Thanks, Len."

"Whatever," Lennart said with a slight tug of a smile. "But I'm going to say I told you so."

"Right, now that that's all sorted" Sorsi said with a flick of a glance back towards the Great Hall. "Here's the plan..."

\* \* \*

><p><em>Sorry to end here guys, but this was the best spot to split it. The next chapter SHOULD be up soon, but it depends on my boyfriend's schedule as he is currently as busy as me, but on a teaching experience practical. It is finished, just being edited at the current time (I edit it too, I just need a second opinion. I tend to miss a lot of mistakes!). But I swear to you it will be up by no later than next weekend. I also want to credit him here for helping me write a few paragraphs throughout the chapter when I got stuck.<em>

\_Now, this chapter may have seemed like I was relaying the last chapter, but I assure you it was needed. The next chapter deals with Siri \_\_\*\*completely\*\*\_\_ changing tactics and I will tell you know, it gets fairly dirty! Let's just say Sorsi and Gerold's plan isn't a very good influence as she goes above and beyond what they tell her to do and it's messy. The next chapter is also larger. \_

\_Ok, I know few people might also say that this seems slightly OOC for Siri, but let me assure you it isn't. Not in the slightest. If you've been reading this story from the beginning, you'll have noticed that Siri tends to overreact very easily and she is a VERY emotional person. Just look at her when she ran away after Leif was born. Or when Astrid turned up without Hiccup awhile back. She overreacts and panics and does something silly. And this issue will be a major weakness down the track. It will lead to a very interesting storyline in a few years for her. The adults as well don't really mean anything by it, they're just proud and think it was

their influence that's helping her.\_

\_I also want to address a few things from some of the reviews last chapter. I'm thrilled that people are reacting to the character of Gerold, and I do not mind if readers are voicing their opinions on who they want they want Siri to be with (that was the whole point of Gerold's introduction!) but may I kindly remind you to all remember their ages. Siri is only \_\_\*\*13 \*\*\_\_and Lennart has yet to turn 13 yet. They are still too young to be with one person their whole lives and not many people go through life dating one person. Siri will go through relationship dramas like everyone else and at the moment, she's only just starting to notice boys, whereas Len isn't noticing girls at all just yet. So, yes, by all means, say who you like her with, explain why, have fun with it lol, but it will be a long time before it is shown who Siri will finally end up with, so please don't be disappointed at what's going on. Just have fun in the process! I'd love to know who you think she should end up with eventually! I have things fully planned, but like any story, never assume anything until it's official! \_

\_Alright, so, \_\_\*\*DON'T FORGET TO REVIEW! \*\*\_\_Just remember please\_\_\*\* NO FLAMES, \*\*\_\_but \_\_\*\*KIND \*\*\_\_constructive criticism accepted.\_\_Next chapter should be up as soon as it's edited. If there are any setbacks I will leave an update either on here or my profile page for you all to check out.\_

\_Thanks for reading! :D\_

\_\*\*A note before I leave. \*\*\_\_I kindly ask my reviewers to please refrain from\_\_\*\* persistently\*\*\_\_ asking for updates. Many of you know that I would NEVER abandon this story, and updates will eventually be given to you, but at the moment, my life is very very busy and if I cannot update on time, it cannot be helped. I do feel bad for not updating enough, but I simply need to take time off on occasion. This is why I worked hard, despite how tired I am, to finish the next two chapters so you do not have to wait as long. I am a casual teacher who is drained after a long school day and my work has to come first, even if it means sacrificing some writing days. I \*\*do not mind\*\* people asking \*\*when\*\* I will update as long as it is a one off (like most of you), it is just when the begging is consistent that I begin to feel pressured. It just simply cannot be helped. Ok, rant over lol. If you're still reading, thank you so much! I'm sure it was boring, I just had to say that in case didn't know why I'm taking so long. I don't want people thinking I'm lazy or anything. Well, I can be, but not all the time! :p \_

### 38. Chapter 38: Be your own person

\_Sorry guys, I wanted this up earlier, but it couldn't be helped. At least it's only been a week though! So, this is the next and final part in this storyline and it has a lot of dirty play coming from Siri. After trying a different tactic, Siri follows the plan from Gerold and Sorsi and more in this chapter. I've tried to change around the rounds to make them a little different again as well as I know it seems I'm repeating myself (this was supposed to be a one off chapter, but it didn't turn out that way!), but I needed to build it up and show you the progression of the games and how Siri handles things as this will start to show you Siri's weakness of overreaction in more detail. That will be an important factor later down the



track. I know it seems I dragged this out, but it was important to show the progression of what happened is all. \_

\_Now Siri acts VERY differently to what you're used to in this chapter, but if you read the first two parts of this storyline carefully, you'll understand and not be surprised why. It all ties in with her overreacting and going too far with things very often.

\_

\_Ok, on with the chapter! \_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 38 " Be your own person<span>

\* \* \*

><p>The following days' dragon races were a flurry of activity. With only two competitors in each race, the competition was fierce, with plenty of dirty tricks, cheating and injuries to go around. Anticipation and excitement was high throughout the day, with everyone losing their voices from screaming for their favourite rider, as one game after another was completed in a violent showdown.<p>

The over 30s competed first; naturally; with Hiccup and Astrid playing against each other for the spot in the final. Despite the slight animosity Siri was feeling towards her parents right now, the teenager couldn't help but feel antsy as she watched her parents battle it out from the grandstands. The game itself was amazing. Every time her father scored, her mother followed close behind. Siri watched, anxiety eating away at her insides, as her father pulled off a spectacular dive, similar to one she did the other day, snatching a lone sheep straight from Astrid's stunned expression to tie the game up five all by the end of the last lap. Just as Siri thought her father had pulled it off, the crowd was stunned into silence as her mother pulled off a spectacular block on Hiccup, who, unable to stop in time, landed in a heap on the ground, Night Fury and Viking in a tangled mess, as Astrid secured her victory. She was in the finals; and after one quick check on her husband, who was muttering several things Siri rarely heard him say, lapped up her victory to the loud roars of the crowd around them.

The following three races were a lot more violent, with the 25 to 30 year olds, the 21 to 25 year olds and the 18 to 21 year olds groups all resorting to some fairly violent tactics in order to achieve their victories, all within the rules. Fascinated, Siri watched as one player in the 21 to 25 year old groups rammed headlong into the other, leading them to spin violently in mid air, being dumped unceremoniously onto the ground, before staggering to their feet as if drunk on mead as they swayed towards the sidelines, the sound of booing echoing around the grandstands towards the other player, who was immediately disqualified for foul play and the injury of another player, with the victory being awarded to the bewildered Viking, still staggering on the ground.

"I'll be amazed if that guy could stand tomorrow, let alone play," Siri noted with a narrowing of her brows. "They'll have to bring the third place Viking in by default."

"I'm amazed he even knows where he is," Lennart added in awe, as he watched the disoriented Viking run headlong into a water trough beside him. "He must have been \_hammered.\_"

"He was!" Sigmund grinned from beside them. "It was awesome!"

"How am I related to you?" Lennart asked his younger brother, who glanced up at his older brother with a slight shrug.

"Maybe I'm just cooler?" the nine year old suggested, much to the annoyance of his mother, who shot her two sons a disgruntled look.

"Don't you dare start!" she exclaimed angrily, making the two boys wince slightly. Turning away from the fight that was clearly brewing, Siri quickly stood up.

"You don't have to go!" Lennart exclaimed hurriedly as he watched his friend move toward the stairs. "You're not on for a little while yet!"

Siri shrugged. "I better get down and get Night Star ready. She's not use to playing hard."

"Please don't tell me you're really going to do it?" Lennart groaned. "Siri, have you seen the accidents that have happened today?" He brandished his hand towards the other Viking, being helped away by Gobber and another Viking as he sang at the top of his lungs in confusion. "Do you really want to prove yourself that much?"

"I'm doing it whether you like it or not, Len," Siri replied heatedly, taking Lennart aback at the tone in the girl's voice. "So, either you cheer me on or don't watch at all."

Lennart sighed. "You know I will, Seer," he said patiently, with a small smile towards the girl. "I just think the idea is stupid. Just promise me you won't go \_too\_ far?"

Returning the smile, Siri quickly made her way towards the stairs without an answer, before hopping down them two at a time as the current game reached the halfway point. Watching his friend vanish from sight, Lennart sighed, before falling into his seat once more with a loud \_thump.\_

"This is really going to go bad in a hurry."

Rushing towards the stables, Siri managed to arrive just as the black sheep, looking enormously exhausted after 3 days of work, sailed across the cloud scaped sky to signal the end of the match. Seeing her arrive, Gerold chuckled.

"Thought you're forfeited there for awhile," he smirked, as Siri greeted her dragon. "You're pretty late."

"Had Lennart try and talk me out of the plan," Siri muttered.

"You know, it's not so much as a plan as a suggestion," Gerold pointed out to her, as a loud cheer went up at the completion of the game. "You don't \_have\_ to do it. Or you do," he added quickly, seeing Siri threw him an irritated glance. Swallowing nervously, he

suddenly grinned. "Whatever you do, Seer, don't hurt me too much. I'd like to have a chance at winning too, you know!"

Siri grinned back. "We'll see."

"With five games down and one to go, it is time for our final round of the day!" Valka suddenly called out, causing the two teenagers to startle slightly, before making their way over to her. "The 13 to 15 year olds will be represented today by Siri Haddock and Gerold Snorgensson for the final spot in tomorrow's final!" Turning to the two of them, she gave them a swift smile. "Riders, prepare!"

"Good luck, Seer," Gerold said honestly, holding out his hand for Siri to shake. "Whatever happens today, I think you're an awesome player in itself."

Smiling to herself, Siri held out her hand for Gerold to shake.

"GO SIRI!" a group of Vikings roared. "PLAY LIKE YOUR PARENTS DID!"

Siri's hand froze in mid air as her stomach began to boil with suppressed anger. Clenching her teeth together, she clasped a hold of Gerold's hand a little too tightly, causing him to look up at her in surprise, but all he saw was a blank face in front of him as Siri's smile slipped from her face. Before he could say a word, though, Valka held up the red flag, causing Gerold to hop onto his dragon, Whiplash's saddle, uneasily, as Siri hopped up onto her own.

"Riders, take your positions!"

"SHOW US WHAT THE HADDOCKS CAN DO, SEER!" one Viking called out from behind.

"You have no idea," the girl mumbled, as she clutched tightly to Night Star's saddle, causing the dragon to move nervously underneath the teenager, having felt the change in the girl's mood.

Valka held up the flag. "Get set...and... ride!"

Siri took off as soon as the flag was lowered, eyes scanning around for Gerold who was hot on her tail. Eyes narrowed, she made her way over a sheep close by, munching on a blade of grass without a care in the world, before she made her way over to the woolly creature, only to be intercepted at the last minute as Gerold came into her line of sight, snatching up the bewildered creature from under her, before making a beeline for the baskets.

"Oh no you don't, not this time!" Siri snarled angrily, as she urged Night Star into the air.

Looking around for Siri, Gerold was slightly concerned when he lost sight of the thirteen year old. Seeing the baskets in sight, though, the teenager urged his dragon forward with a sudden burst of speed as he approached the baskets-he raised his arms to place the sheep into the basket-

\_WHAM!\_

A sudden roar of confusion erupted from the stands as the Vikings suddenly watched Siri approach from above, before suddenly blocking the fourteen year old just as he approached the baskets, causing Gerold and Whiplash to suddenly veer off course, before slamming into the baskets at full speed, where Gerold was barely holding on for dear life, as Siri snatched up his fallen sheep, and slammed it into her own basket.

Silence fell across the crowd.

"What...what just happened?" Hiccup asked, taken aback, as he watched his daughter take a victory lap, despite the fact that Gerold had not quite been able to right himself yet.

"I was about to ask you that," Astrid said, her eyes focussed on her daughter's form. "That's not like Siri at all." She turned to Hiccup with worried eyes. "Do you think she's gotten too into this?"

"I...I don't know," Hiccup admitted apprehensively, watching as Gerold got back into the game. "Maybe she just did it without thinking?"

"Maybe..."

"Gods, Seer, that's not what they meant when they said play 'rough'," Lennart mumbled to himself as he nervously watched the match, which was getting rougher by the minute as Gerold barely escaped another ram attempt by the Haddock girl in order to throw a dazed sheep into his own basket, before taking off in the opposite direction, his head whipping back to watch Siri who chased after him.

"What the heck are you doing, Siri?!" he exclaimed furiously, as he criss-crossed the area to avoid the girl.

Coming to an abrupt halt, Siri raised her eyebrows towards the young man. "What do you mean what am I doing?" she asked him, irritably. "You're the one who told me to play rough, so that's what I'm doing!"

"You know as well as I do this is not what we meant!" she heard him exclaim after her as she took off again, heading towards another lone sheep, slightly hidden under a grandstand. Banking hard, Siri heard Night Star squawk alarmingly over the rush of the wind, as they narrowly avoided a head on collision with the wooden posts of the grandstands, with Siri scooping up the wide eyed sheep into her arms, before coaxing a slightly wary Night Star towards the baskets, much to the bewilderment of the watching crowd, who were slightly open mouthed at the antics the Haddock girl was performing.

"What in the name of Thor is that girl thinking?!" Siri heard one woman exclaim in shock. "She could have seriously injured her dragon with that stunt!"

"And herself," another woman added warily. "I don't know what's going through that girl's head, but I don't like it."

"Well, I assure you her parents didn't teach her that, that's for sure," another answered, leading to a smug look to cross Siri's face as she went after another sheep as the halfway point of the game

approached.

\_I'm surprising them\_, she thought to herself, smugly, as she looked around at the crowd. \_Well it's about time!\_

Focussing her attention back upon the sheep, however, she suddenly realised it was no longer there. Frowning slightly, she scanned the surrounding area for the elusive creature, only to look up and find it clutched into the talons of Whiplash, speeding ahead of her towards the baskets.

"Hey!" she screamed towards Gerold's retreating back. Urging Night Star on, she picked up slight speed in order to gain ground. "That one was mine, Gerold!"

"Well, I didn't see you going after it!" she heard him call back, as he slowed down upon approach to his basket, resulting in Siri catching the boy up. Seeing her come within reach of him and his dragon, Gerold's expression suddenly turned thoughtful and before Siri could reach him, Gerold suddenly turned towards her with a wink, before throwing the sheep into the basket.

Only it wasn't his basket.

Coming to a hasty stop, Siri's mouth fell open in shock as her irritation levels rose. Why would he steal a sheep from under her, only to then drop it into her basket, instead of his own?

"Did he just do what I think he did?" Hiccup asked his wife in surprise, whose eyes were as wide as saucers as she watched the scene play out in front of her. Hearing her husband's voice, she nodded mutely, unable to take her eyes off the two of them, as all around them, sounds of interest and surprise erupted the others.

"Show off," Lennart muttered angrily to himself, watching the older boy's antics. Beside him, Leif was as wide eyed and mute as his mother as he watched his sister play, which was a first for the seven year old. Having grown up with the teenager, Leif had never seen his sister act like this, no matter how competitive she got. Even Ingrid, sitting upon his lap, was squirming uncomfortably at the scene in front of them.

Unimpressed, Siri's stomach began to bubble with anger as she threw a dangerous glare towards the boy, causing him to reel back in alarm at the flash of anger crossing the girl's eyes. Whatever reaction he had expected, it certainly hadn't been this.

"What do you think you were doing?!" Siri screamed furiously towards him, eyes flashing dangerously. "I don't need your help!"

Eyes narrowing dangerously, Gerold steered himself in front of her, annoyance pulsating through his own body. "Are you sure about that?" he scoffed. "Because it sure looks like you're doing everything possible to get rid of me. I thought I could maybe snap you out of this stupid idea of yours if I helped you win!" Shaking his head at her, he turned to leave. "Fine," he said irritably, "I won't help ever again!"

"Good, because it's not like I need it anyway!"

"THAT'S ENOUGH!" Valka suddenly roared, her voice raising a few octaves as she screamed. Clearing her already sore throat, she threw a furious glance towards the two of them. "You're both acting ridiculous, and if you can't get over yourselves, you'll both be disqualified, do you understand me?! Now keep playing!"

Throwing an infuriated glance towards his competitor, Gerold shot off for another lap, Siri following close behind, to the sounds of an almost deafening silence. The Vikings were too shocked to speak, and when they did, it was of concern.

"Do you think we've been a bad influence on her?" Hiccup asked Astrid nervously. "Maybe seeing us play has made her like this."

Astrid shook her head slowly. "No," she said, "something else is going on, I think." She turned to Lennart, who was watching the game, biting his lip. "Len, has something happened we should know about? I mean, Seer has always been competitive, but this-"she nodded to the game, "-this is beyond anything she usually does."

Lennart looked at the Chieftainess anxiously. Should he tell her what Siri was feeling right now? Mulling it over in his head, he couldn't avoid noticing the concern in the Viking woman's eyes, and with a sigh, he opened his mouth...

\_Bang \_

Whirling around, Hiccup, Astrid and Lennart's eyes widened in horror as they saw Gerold sprawled on top of the basket platform, with Siri flying off for another lap. From what they gathered, Siri had rammed into Gerold at high speed as he reached the baskets as he landed another goal, causing him to hang on for dear life. Unfortunately for him, though, he had been too close to the baskets and Whiplash's large frame hadn't been able to stop in time, causing his rider to go flying off his back in a spectacular crash.

In the stands, Anna and Annika looked towards Hiccup. "Surely that has to mean disqualification, Hiccup?" Anna asked him, astonished "Gerold fell off his dragon!"

Hiccup sighed. "That wasn't directly from Siri, though," he pointed out quietly, as he felt hundreds of eyes watching him furiously from all around him. "This isn't classed as foul play. Yet," he added with yet another sigh. Closing his eyes, he rubbed his wearied face. "What is that girl thinking?" he muttered, as he suddenly felt Astrid's hand slip into his own, squeezing his own gently. He opened his eyes to meet her own, identical expressions of anxiety etched into her own.

"We'll have to talk with her," she told him, with a shake of her head. "This isn't like her..."

"I'll say," Hiccup said furiously as he watched Siri block Gerold once again, causing him to shake his head angrily at her. Seeing this, Astrid clenched her teeth.

"Oh, that girl isn't getting away with this, I assure you," she hissed angrily.

"And we're now in the final lap of the game with Siri on 6 and Gerold

on 3," Valka announced absently, shock radiating through her own thoughts at what was happening. "The players are both approaching the final sheep..."

"Seer, snap out of it!" Gerold hissed at her as they approached the sheep. "I know you're annoyed, but I think you've proved your point! You're worrying everyone...Siri!"

Ignoring her friend's pleas, Siri shot straight past him, heading for the sheep, only for Gerold to catch her up. Seeing he was on track to snatch the sheep before her, she patted Night Star's head and nodded towards him.

"Night Star, spines!"

Giving her rider a squawk of concern, the Nadder did what she was told and shot a number of spines in the boy's direction, causing him to veer off course as they headed straight for them, just enough for Siri to snatch the victory. All that was left was the black sheep and the game would be over.

Hearing the horn echo around the stadium, Siri scanned her eyes furiously for any sign of the dark woollen creature, heart beating wildly in her ears. There was no way she was going to lose now, not at this stage. Seeing Siri's focus, though, Gerold sighed and he slowed down slightly as he caught sight of the creature first, sailing overhead. Glancing over at Siri and seeing her distracted, he quickly took off in the other direction, urging his Monstrous Nightmare forward as quick as he could go.

"GO GEROLD!" he heard his sister yell from the stands, making him wince. His sister would have given him away surely, and turning his head around, sure enough, Siri was following close behind him. Whipping his head back around, he urgently pressed forward, but he could hear the teenage girl catching him up quickly. Within a few seconds, she caught up to him, ramming him, dragon to dragon, catching him off guard, before pulling up, catching the sheep by the tips of her fingertips and taking off in the opposite direction to dump the sheep, just as Gerold fell off his dragon onto the hard ground below. The horn sounded. The game was over. Siri had won.

But that wasn't the end. Not by a long shot. Vikings all around the stadium were yelling furiously at Valka to strip the winning title off Siri, but her hands were tied. Siri had not officially broken any rules. She did not knock Gerold off his dragon with her own hands and she did not have a weapon on her. She was the winner, dirty play or not. Quickly looking around, Lennart quickly discharged himself from the crowd and raced off towards the stairs. He had to get to Siri before her parents, for everyone's sakes.

Hearing the mutterings and cheers of surprise erupt from the grandstands, Siri smirked. Let's just see who they compared her to now. Heading towards the ground, Siri cheerfully jumped off the back of her dragon, before quickly turning to face her, only to find an angry pair of eyes staring back at her.

She frowned towards the Nadder. "What?!" she exclaimed, throwing her hands up at her. "I did what I had to do. Don't go looking at me like that."

"Did what you had to do?" Siri heard Lennart scoff behind her, and turning around, the teenager soon came face to face with the disapproving face of her friend, who narrowed his eyes as he looked into her face. "I don't remember Sorsi telling you to knock Gerold flying like that. Actually," he added with the shake of his head, "I don't remember any of that being in the plan."

"Well, I improvised," Siri said, irritation seeping into her voice, "and it worked didn't it? I've surprised all of them haven't I?"

"Not in a good way, either," Lennart muttered, causing Siri's eyes to narrow slightly.

"Seriously, what is everyone's problem?!" Siri exclaimed heatedly. "I was told to change the way I act, and I did. Now everyone's having a go at me for it!"

"We told you to play rough, not dirty!" Gerold said irritably as he approached the pair. Glancing at Siri, he threw her a furious glare. "Oh, and in case you're wondering, Siri, that crunch sound you heard early in the game was my arm smashing into the ledge, thanks for asking."

"Well you finished the game, didn't you?" Siri snapped irritably, lowering her eyes to Gerold's bruised arm. "And you're the one who told me to do this in the first place!"

"That's not what we said and you know it! You acted like a complete jerk out there!" he yelled back angrily, taking Siri slightly aback. "There's a time and a place for dirty play, but not for a stupid game." Shaking his head, Gerold clutched his arm, before gesturing to Whiplash to follow him. "I thought you were alright Siri," he said bitterly, "but you're just as bad as the rest of them; all to prove a stupid point."

"Well, it worked didn't it?" Siri retaliated back, although her stomach clenched slightly seeing the disappointment in both boys' eyes. "No one's comparing me to my parents, are they?"

"Not for your parents anyway," Lennart mumbled irritably, causing Siri to round on him, eyes blazing angrily.

"And what's that supposed to mean?!" She screamed angrily, her voice causing a number of eyes to turn in their direction.

"I mean you're letting that stupid pride of yours get in the way!" Lennart exclaimed. "I've known you for a long time, Seer, and I know my friend would never play like that, no matter how competitive the game got! After watching that game, though, I have no idea who was playing, because it certainly wasn't you!"

"Well, if you don't like the changes, then leave!" Siri snapped back, instantly regretting it as she saw a look of hurt cross her friend's face, which was immediately replaced by anger.

"Fine!" he exclaimed heatedly. "Come find me when you're acting like you again. The real you," he added quickly seeing as Siri was about to open her mouth. "You know the one who never used to care that she was like her mother."



"Be that way, then!" Siri called after him angrily, but on the inside her stomach began to churn at the sight of her best friend walking away, before her throat began to feel constricted. Opening her mouth to say something, though, a loud shout erupted from behind her.

"SIRI ASTRID HADDOCK!" her father screamed furiously, causing her temper to slowly rise once more as she wheeled around to face him and her mother, hurrying alongside her father with an expression of pure thunder etched across her already furious face.

"Would you care to tell me what that was all about?!" her father exclaimed angrily, gesturing a hand around the arena, where many Vikings were still glancing over at them in shock. "You went against every rule of dragon racing in one round!"

"I never actually\_ broke\_ a rule," Siri pointed out. "I didn't actually push Gerold off his dragon myself did I? Plus I didn't have a weapon on me either..."

"Don't get smart, Siri," her mother said warningly, giving her daughter a firm glance. "Whether you did that or not, what you did was\_ not\_ on, especially for you."

"And how do you know whether it was like me or not?!" Siri exclaimed heatedly, looking up at her mother with a determined gaze. "Have you ever thought that maybe this might be the way I \_really\_ am?"

Astrid snorted. "I don't believe that for a second, Siri, now what's going on? Who's put you up to this?"

"No one's put me up to this," Siri hurriedly denied. "Why would you ask that?"

"Well, it seems to be that you only started acting like this when you started hanging around with Sorsi and her brother," Hiccup said, before Astrid could speak up. Listening to this reasoning, though, Astrid nodded in agreement. "What did they say to put you up to this?"

"Oh, so it's their fault is it?!" Eyes narrowed, Siri glared at her parents. "Well, for your information it isn't! They've been helping me more than anything!"

"Helping you become someone you're not?" Hiccup asked her, unimpressed. "Because the way you've been acting isn't like you and even you know it. Heck," he added with a glance towards the inquisitive Vikings, "everyone knows this isn't like you!"

"Yeah, and everyone seems to think the way I usually act is just like you and mum," Siri replied bitterly. "It doesn't matter what I do, I always seem to be compared to one of you. Or haven't you noticed that every \_single\_ person seems to think I'm just a mini version of one of you?" Siri asked her parents, both of whom exchanged expressions of surprise, before Hiccup glanced back towards his daughter, eyebrows raised.

"Is that what this all about?" he asked his daughter, whose determined expression didn't waver despite the angry look etched on

her father's face. "You're acting like this all because of some comparisons between you and us?"

"All because..." Siri stuttered incredulously, raising herself up to her full height in irritation. "Have you ever realised how annoying it is to be compared to your parents all the time?! It doesn't matter what I do, everyone\_ always\_ sees something of either you or mum in me..."

"And how is that such a bad thing?!" her father exclaimed. "Do you realise how much I would have loved to have been compared to your grandfather at your age, Siri? I would have given anything for it!"

"Well, I don't!" Siri hollered, causing several Vikings to scatter as her temper flared further. "I'm\_ not\_ either of you, and I'm sick of being compared! I'm my own person and..."

"Oh, your own person are you?" Hiccup asked furiously. "Well, from what I can see, you're certainly not acting like it! If you want people to start treating you like your own person, maybe you should start acting like it instead of acting like a child!"

The colour began to rise in Siri's face as her father said this; a sure sign of the impending fury that was raging inside her, and with a pang, Hiccup noted, was very much like her mother, no matter how much the girl wished to deny it.

"Oh yeah, well at least people have stopped comparing me now!" Siri retorted, albeit weaker than she'd intended.

"Yeah, and at what cost?" her mother asked her, with a disappointed look aimed towards her eldest child. "You're going to act like a complete jerk for the rest of your life just because you don't want to be compared to your father and I? Because that doesn't seem like much of a win to me."

"Well, if everybody would just stop comparing me, maybe this wouldn't have happened!" Siri exclaimed tearfully, her chest heaving as she spoke. The corner of her eyes burned slightly as she took a step back. "Why can't anybody just understand?!"

"Siri, we do understand...Siri, come back!" Hiccup shouted after her, anxiety clawing at his stomach as the thirteen year old suddenly turned on her heel and ran off, much to the shock of the remaining Vikings still loitering around the area. The silence was almost deafening as they tried to wrap their heads around what they had just witnessed.

"Great," Hiccup said with a long sigh, as he ran a hand over his face. "I just had to make matters worse, didn't I?"

"You didn't make matters any worse than they already were," Astrid reassured him as she placed a comforting hand on his shoulder. Looking in the direction Siri had run off to, though, she sighed. "We should have known something was up," she said quietly. "She's been off since that first match. I mean, we did compare her to me. \_A lot\_."

"I just wish she'd told us how she was feeling," Hiccup said

miserably, glancing up to look at his wife's concerned face. "We could have done something."

"I have a feeling that's what she's been trying to tell me for the past few days," Astrid admitted sheepishly, to Hiccup's surprise. "Lennart seemed a bit weird, too." Groaning loudly, Astrid buried her head into her hands with a shake of her head. "We should have listened to her."

" Well, we're going to now," Hiccup told her reassuringly, as he nodded his head towards their house. "It's time we all talked. Whether she's ready to or not."

\* \* \*

><p>Siri felt like an idiot. Lying on her bed with her head buried in her pillow, she couldn't stop the barrage of tears from escaping. Beside her, Midnight was curled into her friend's side, licking the salty tears as they made their way down her face, making Siri giggle slightly despite the misery she felt. <em>Why was everything so messed up<em>? She thought to herself as she sniffed loudly. All she'd wanted was to escape the comparisons she continually got with her mother, and now things had just gotten worse instead of better. Sitting there in her own thoughts, Siri's stomach clenched tightly at the image of Gerold's furious expression as he turned away from her, clutching his badly bruised arm. The badly bruised arm \_she'd\_ caused. Sure, it had seemed fun at the time, but up here, sitting alone in her room, with nothing but her own thoughts to keep her company, she was beginning to feel pretty annoyed with herself, made worse by the fact that her best friend was angry with her too. The knowledge of that made a fresh wave of tears to burst forth, which she quickly tried to stem as she heard voices down on the bottom level.

"Siri, are you in there, sweetheart?" she heard her father's voice suddenly call out from the other side of the door.

Sniffling loudly, Siri raised a hand to quickly scrub at her reddened eyes. "Come in," she said quietly.

The door creaked open slightly, allowing for Hiccup's head to cautiously peer around the door. Seeing Siri, he slowly opened the wooden frame the rest of the way, to reveal both he and Astrid, standing there slightly sheepish as they approached the bed with small smiles towards their daughter.

"Hey Seer," her father whispered softly, taking his daughter's hands in his. "Are you alright? I know what we said out there may have sounded harsh, but..."

"You were right, though," Siri interrupted quietly. So quietly that Hiccup had to strain to hear her, and when he did, his brows furrowed slightly in confusion.

"What were we right about, Seer?" Hiccup asked her gently. "About the way you acted?"

"Well...not in the way I acted, exactly," Siri admitted as she raised her head to meet her parents' concerned gazes. "But-" She sighed. "-But I don't want to act the way I did all my life just to stop

people from comparing me. I mean-" To Siri's annoyance, her already glassy eyes began to fill with tears once more. "-I hurt Gerold today in that match, and it could have been a lot worse, and the thing is; I \_don't\_ want to act like that. I mean, it was fun for awhile," Siri admitted shamefacedly as she snuck a peek at her parent's surprised faces, "but seeing that bruise on Gerold's arm..." Trailing off slightly, Siri breathed a deep sigh. "I know I shouldn't have done it, but the thing is neither of you were listening to me-"

"But you didn't come to us, baby," Hiccup said quickly, with a quick confirming glance in his wife's direction. "You never even told us what was going on-"

"Because you didn't\_ let\_ me," Siri stressed; a pair of pleading eyes set on her parents. "I kept trying to talk to one of you, but we were always interrupted."

Astrid's face dropped as she recalled her daughter's earlier conversation, cut off by the sound of the warning horn, and she groaned. So that's what her daughter had been trying to ask her! And she just blew her off like it was nothing. The thought of it made the Viking woman's stomach drop like a stone.

"I'm so sorry, sweetie," her mother said guiltily, meeting her blue eyes with Siri's bright azure ones. "If I'd known you were feeling like this, I would have dropped everything in a heartbeat."

Siri gave her mother a small smile. "I know you would have, mum," she said quietly.

Hiccup frowned as he shifted his eyes between his wife and daughter. "Sweetie, if you were feeling like this, though, why didn't you approach us when there \_was\_ time. I mean," he threw a quick glance to Astrid; "there was plenty of time after the races when you could have talked to us."

"After the races, all you talked about was how everything I did reminded you of either you or mum," Siri replied bitterly. "You wouldn't have listened to me if I tried. I kept saying I was nothing like you, yet none of you seemed to listen to me!" she exclaimed in irritation. "I mean, it was the same after both of the races." She cleared her throat and put on a strong Viking accent, making her father grin despite himself. "Oh she reminds me so much of her mother. That's exactly how her mother would have played. She looks just out Astrid out there. I mean," she added, returning to her normal voice with a quick glance at her parents, "do you know how \_annoying\_ that is?" she asked her parents. "It didn't seem to matter what I did, everyone always saw one of you in the way I played! It's like I'm not even my own person. How is that even fair? And the worse of it is that you two were as bad! And don't deny it-" she added with a firm glance of her own as her father opened his mouth to speak, "-you were almost as bad as everyone else."

"I won't deny it," Hiccup sighed. "I admit that we were as bad as everyone else with the comparisons."

Siri frowned. "Why?" she begged.

Hiccup gave her a sheepish smile. "Because everybody does it when it comes to their children, sweetie, I'm sorry to say. It's just

whenever we see kids doing something that makes us proud, we like to think they got it from us. It's just something we do without thinking. We never meant for you to react this way."

Siri raised her eyebrows in disbelief. "That's really...stupid," she said. "But weirdly enough, Len said the same thing," she added with a slight chuckle. "Now he really \_does \_take after his mother."

"And so do you, as much as you don't want to admit it," Hiccup said with a grin towards his wife, who chuckled in response. Face turning serious again; he switched his attention back to the thirteen year old beside him. "But at the same time, we \_know \_you're not your mother-"

"Thank Thor for that," Astrid muttered with a wide grin, leading Siri to giggle.

"-but there are things that you do similar," Hiccup continued, with a small smile at his wife's comment. "The point is, Seer, we don't mean to do it and even if we did, you should take it as a compliment." Trailing off slightly, Hiccup heaved a deep sigh. "I would have done anything to be compared to your grandfather at your age, baby, so in reality you're sort of lucky."

Taking this in, Siri fell silent. She'd never thought about that. At her age, her father would have given\_ anything\_ to be compared to his father, yet here she was wanting the complete opposite. Her stomach clenched tightly as guilt engulfed her, and looking up at her parents, she smiled apologetically at them.

"I'm sorry," she said quietly. "I never thought of it like that."

"I never expected you to," Astrid said softly. "We just wanted you to think of that, is all. But I'll also admit that comparing you wasn't fair, so we'll make a deal, alright?"

Siri's eyes widened. "What sort of deal?"

Astrid smiled. "Well, if you don't act the way you did again when playing tomorrow, we'll try to stop people from comparing you as much. But I can't make any promises. It's just something you'll have to live with, I'm afraid. Is that fair?"

Siri looked thoughtful, but after a few moments, she couldn't help but allow a small smile to cross her face. "It's a small victory," she admitted with a sigh, "but, I guess that's fair," she added with another smile. "I'm sorry for being so rough in the game earlier. That actually \_was \_Sorsi and Gerold's idea," she admitted sheepishly.

"I figured," Astrid said in annoyance. "Considering both of them did the same thing last year."

Siri laughed. "No wonder they knew what to do." Her smile slipped, though, as she recalled her fight with Gerold and Lennart.

"What's wrong, Seer?" her mother asked her.

Siri sighed. "You guys may have forgiven me, but I have a feeling Len may never speak to me again," she said quietly, her eyes stinging

with tears. "He was really angry at me earlier. Gerold too."

"Well unlike his father, Lennart isn't one to hold a grudge, Seer," Hiccup reassured his daughter as he placed an arm around her shoulders. "He'll forgive you, I'm sure. As for Gerold," he added with a slight mischievous grin towards the teenager, "I have a feeling you couldn't do anything wrong in his books."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Siri asked her dad in amusement, who gave a shrug, but grinned back all the same.

"Nothing," Hiccup said innocently, "except that I think that boy might have a crush on you. I mean, have you seen the way he played earlier? He gave you a sheep!"

"Which I could have gotten myself," Siri said in annoyance, but even she couldn't hide a faint blush that was rising in her cheeks.

"Told you," Astrid grinned, noting the redness in the girl's cheeks, making her blush even further.

"MUM!"

"Don't tease her too much," Hiccup said, as his teasing grin suddenly slipped from his face. "I really don't want my little girl with any boy just yet. She's too young!"

"No worries there, dad," Siri assured him, her colour returning to normal. "I mean, Gerold's cute and all, but I don't want to have a boyfriend just yet. Maybe later," she teased, making Hiccup's relieved face turn pale again. "That's if he and Len ever speak to me again," she sighed. "I mean, I don't mind as much about Gerold, but if Len never did..." she trailed off, horrified at the thought.

"If I know Len, sweetie, and I'm pretty sure we do after all these years, he'll be ready to forgive you by tomorrow," Astrid reassured the anxious teenager. "He never was one to hold a grudge. Unlike his father," she muttered.

"You didn't see his face, though," Siri said. "He was pretty mad."

"You two have been friends since you were toddlers. I highly doubt he'd stay mad at you over this," Hiccup told the thirteen year old gently, making her give a small smile.

"Thanks dad," she said gratefully, reaching up to kiss his cheek, and then her mother's, just as a knock on the front door downstairs startled them.

"Are you expecting anyone?" Hiccup asked his wife, who shook her head with a frown.

"Not that I know of," she said, getting off the bed with a groan, before making her way downstairs and opening the door, to a startled surprise.

"Lennart!" Siri heard her mother exclaim happily. "We were just talking about you."

"I hope it wasn't anything bad, considering the fight Seer and I had earlier," he replied nervously, causing Siri to hop off her bed and race downstairs before Hiccup could barely blink.

"Hey, Len," Siri said awkwardly as she spotted him by the door. Glancing over to where he heard her voice, the twelve year old gave her a small smile.

"Hey, Seer," he said nervously as he entered the house. Coming to a stop in front of the girl, he wrung his hands nervously, before glancing up toward her.

"Look, I'm, sorry for what I said earlier-"

"I'm sorry for the way I acted-"

Siri and Lennart laughed as they spoke at the same time, and closing his mouth, Lennart allowed his best friend to speak. Grateful, she nodded at him.

"Len, I'm sorry for acting like a total jerk today," she said. "I know I went too far, and I shouldn't have done it. I had a talk with mum and dad just then," she added with a small glance towards her parents standing behind her, "and it turns out you were right that all parents do it." Glancing back to Lennart, the young girl bit her lip nervously. "The thing is, I was wrong and I promise not to do act like someone I'm not again. Can you forgive me?"

Lennart's face was thoughtful, and for a moment, Siri's stomach did a barrel roll in body as she watched his face filter through several different emotions, from surprise, to annoyance, then to relief, until finally he smiled brightly at her.

"Well, I guess you wouldn't be Siri if you listened to me or anyone else," he grinned. He held out his hand to her. "I forgive you, Seer."

Beaming widely, Siri bypassed the hand shake, instead taking Lennart in for a tight hug in which he yelped at the pressure the teenager was putting on his ribs, before wrapping his arms around Siri's waist in response. After a few moments, the two broke off, slightly embarrassed at the contact. Coughing nervously, Siri glanced around at her parents.

"Do you think I should go and apologise to Gerold today?"

"I'd leave it until tomorrow, Seer, it's getting late. Let him cool off tonight," Hiccup replied.

"I wouldn't even bother," Lennart huffed, with a quick glance towards his friend. "He's the one who gave you the idea in the first place!"

Siri glanced at him, eyebrows raised. "Yeah, but I don't think even he expected me to go\_ that\_ far; and I \_did\_ hurt his arm," she pointed out.

Lennart sighed. "Yeah, I guess so," he said, just as the front door opened again, making him and Siri start.

"Sorry, guys, I was just seeing if I could bring Leif and Ingrid home is all," Anna apologised as she stuck her head in. "I know Len's already here, but..."

"You can come in, Anna, everything is sorted here," Astrid said, as she held out her hands for her toddler, who cheerfully raced over to her mother and flung herself in her arms.

"Hey, Siri, are you alright?" Anna asked the thirteen year old as she walked in. "I heard what happened."

Siri nodded. "Yeah, I'm alright. Just overreacted as usual, is all," she grinned.

"We all do that, sweetie, don't worry," Anna grinned, before she turned to her son standing nearby. "You ready to go, Len?" she asked him. "It's just your father is watching dinner and we all know how that will turn out if we don't get back soon."

"Uh oh." Lennart blanched, before he turned to Siri. "We better go. Last time we left dad on his own to cook, we were sick for days."

"That bad, huh?" Siri grinned, to Hiccup and Leif's amusement. "I'll see you tomorrow, then."

"See you tomorrow," Lennart agreed with a kind smile, before he quickly followed his mother out the door. As it shut behind them, Leif nervously turned to his older sister.

"Are you going to play that rough again tomorrow?" he asked her. "Because remember you're playing against mum."

Siri frowned. "Playing against...oh!" She chuckled, as she remembered the final round. "No, I'll be playing my way, Leif, I promise. Although I think mum will beat me this round. She's too good."

Astrid grinned. "Thanks for the compliment, sweetie."

"Well, it's true," Hiccup said with an answering grin, making her roll her eyes.

"Hmm... maybe I need to play rough!" Siri exclaimed cheerfully. "It'll be the only way I'll beat mum anyway!"

"Yeah, good luck with that," Leif teased.

"Is that so?" Siri asked him, eyes sparkling with mischief.

"Oh no, you don't!" Leif exclaimed, as he took off upstairs to avoid his sister, so just shrugged and plopped herself down on the wooden couch.

" Couldn't be bothered," she said lazily as she put her legs up on the couch. "If I have to compete against mum tomorrow, I'm going to need all the energy I can get! I'll just have to head down earlier. I better apologise to Gerold..."

\* \* \*



><p>"...So, the bottom line is...I was an idiot. Do you forgive me?"<p>

"Well, I guess it was our fault for giving you the stupid idea in the first place," Gerold admitted with a sheepish grin, having listened patiently to Siri throughout her whole apology. "We should have known you would take it too far. You are a Haddock after all."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Siri asked him heatedly, and her annoyance grew slightly as she watched Gerold grin at her.

"Well, you're a Haddock," Gerold said again with a wide grin, "and you know as well as I do, that all Haddocks are as stubborn as rocks. That's one thing you can't deny, Seer. You have the family trait."

"I-" Stopping mid sentence, Siri suddenly found herself reddening as she realised she didn't have a comeback to that. Opening and closing her mouth like a fish, she soon closed it with a snap, before crossing her arms in a huff, much to Gerold's amusement.

"Told you," he chortled, as he watched her expression turn from disbelief to annoyance. "As much you want to deny it, that is something you definitely got from your parents."

"Thanks a lot," Siri said in irritation, before she glanced down at Gerold's arm with a frown. "So, you're not mad that I hurt your elbow yesterday? It looks really sore."

Looking down at his bruised arm, Gerold shrugged. "To be honest," he said with a grin, "I think I was more mad you beat me than anything. I knew someone would snap you out of it."

"I think you were the only one!" Siri exclaimed with a laugh, just as the warning horn sounded in the distance, and turning to it in a panic, Siri looked up towards the sky, where the sun was already positioned high in the cloudy atmosphere.

"I've gotta go!" she exclaimed quickly, rushing towards the arena. "I should have been there ages ago!"

"Hey, do you want to do something after the match?!" Gerold called after her, his voice slightly shy. "Even if you don't win?!"

"I don't know!" Siri called back over her shoulder. "It might have to wait!"

"That's alright, I get it!" Gerold replied with a grin, as Siri made a dash down the hill, the last thing she heard from the teenager being "good luck!" as she skidded towards the rest of the players and dragons, who, hearing the girl's footsteps, glanced over at her, brows raised as soon as she finally arrived.

"Sorry, got held up," Siri apologised sheepishly, much to Valka's amusement, who didn't waste time in turning to the other players, before issuing out brief instructions as Gobber prepared the horn for the start of the game.

"Alright, now that we're all here, I just have a few things to say," Valka said sternly as she swept her eyes over the six players. "Yes, this is a normal version of dragon racing which could end at any time, but that doesn't mean-" she stressed, focussing her eyes on Siri for a moment, making her flush and look down, "-that you will be allowed to play dirty. There are different age groups playing here today; which means no weapons will be allowed. Anyone who uses a weapon or purposefully knocks someone off the back of their dragon will be immediately disqualified. Is that understood?"

A chorus of yeses went around the six players, and satisfied, Valka nodded.

"Good," she said. "Now, good luck everybody. We'll start as soon as Gobber's ready." Making a start towards Gobber, eagerly ready in his position by the horn, she suddenly stopped and threw a smile towards her daughter-in-law and granddaughter. "Good luck," she said cheerfully, before she made her way over to Gobber, waiting readily by the horn.

"I guess that's my cue to go, too," Hiccup said as he saw preparations almost complete. Turning back to his wife, he gave her a tender smile. "Well milady, I'd say good luck, but considering you beat me, I don't think you need it."

Astrid grinned. "Don't you forget it either," she said with a mischievous grin, before she quickly grabbed hold of Hiccup's vest and brought his lips to hers in a swift kiss, resulting a gagging sound from Siri, who averted her eyes as she blushed as red as her father, who taken by surprise, was turning a magnificent shade of crimson, thanks to the audience they were surrounded by. As Astrid pulled away, Hiccup quickly shook his head to clear it, before grinning down at Siri cheerfully.

"Well, good luck, Seer. Try to trick your mum for me."

"Glad to," Siri grinned, as she looked up at her mother, who grinned in return.

"I'll see you girls later," Hiccup said, as he saw Gobber move towards the horn out of the corner of his eye. "No dirty tricks!"

"We make no promises," mother and daughter answered in unison, causing them to stare at each other, before bursting into fits of laughter as they both got on their dragons. As he walked away, Hiccup just shook his head, before looking down at Toothless, walking alongside him.

"I don't know about you bud," Hiccup said, with a glance towards the Night Fury, "but Siri is more like her mother than she thinks, even if she won't admit it."

Cooing in agreement, Toothless stopped by the grandstand stairs to wait for his friend to climb up first, before he squeezed his way up; him being the only dragon allowed in the grandstands, he made sure he didn't this freedom for granted. Even if it did mean he was squished in with hundreds of noisy and oftentimes, smelly, Vikings.

"Are they about to start dad?" Leif asked his father as Hiccup

squeezed through the seats, before plopping down onto a seat between his two youngest children; Toothless settling in beside him.

"Almost, buddy. Just waiting for the horn now," Hiccup explained to the seven year old as he nodded to Gobber, ready by the horn. "I was just with mum and Siri, and I don't care what that girl says," Hiccup chuckled, turning his attention to his friends sitting around him, "she has a lot in common with Astrid than she realises. They were like twins just then."

"She is a lot like you," Snotlout pointed out to his Chief. "Remember when all you wanted was to be like other Vikings? You tried everything to be seen as one of us, even though it wasn't you." He nodded to Siri down below. "This thing with Siri isn't so different."

"Is that sentiment coming from you, 'Lout?" Hiccup asked the Jorgenson patriarch with a grin. "I never thought you'd remember that."

"I'm not all jerk," Snotlout grinned.

"Thank Thor for that," Fishlegs said with a chuckle, making a few people snort around them, especially from Anna and Lennart, who looked towards Snotlout with wide grins. Seeing the looks he was being given, he frowned.

"Oh shut up."

"They're about to start!" Leif exclaimed animatedly, as he frantically pointed towards the ground where Valka was just holding up the red flag above her head. Eagerly turning their attentions back to the scene in front of them, the Vikings held their breath in excitement as Valka looked around at the players.

"Riders, at the ready!"

Holding onto Night Star's saddle tightly, Siri threw her mother one last quick glance, which she returned with a large smile, as Valka began to slowly lower the flag.

"Get set...and...ride!"

The red flag was lowered and as the sound of the horn echoed around the grandstands, six impatient players shot off towards the first sheep, with Astrid and Siri in the immediate lead as they flew around the island with the first lap. Cheers erupted all around them.

"GO SIRI, GO SIRI, GO SIRI!" Lennart chanted, flinging himself up off his seat, followed soon by the other kids, who all joined in with the chant, while the adults around them, chanted "GO ASTRID!" instead. Soon the cries of "GO ASTRID!" and "GO SIRI!" rang loud and clear throughout the immediate area, beginning both new cheers and clashes with chants, causing slight confusion within some groups of Vikings.

Taking a deep breath, Siri calmly scanned her eyes towards the crowd, all the while keeping a close eye on her mother nearby. Squinting carefully towards the ground as she turned a corner, a flash of white

suddenly caught the thirteen year olds eye, and without hesitation, she shot off towards the ground.

"Closer girl, closer," Siri muttered gently to the Nadder, whose talons opened slightly as they inched closer to the frightened animal. Almost there.

A flash of blue was all the teenager was able to see as all of a sudden, the sheep vanished before her very eyes, and looking up, Siri watched as her mother had come in from behind her, snatching up the creature with a grin towards her daughter.

"Sorry, Seer, but this one's mine!" she chuckled, as she flew off quickly toward the baskets and dumped the sheep in to the loud cheers of the crowd.

"GO MUM!" Leif yelled wildly, as he jumped up and down on the spot, much to the hilarity of Lennart standing beside him.

"I thought you were going for Siri?" Lennart asked the seven year old, who gave a slight shrug.

"I'm going for both," he said, as a grin spread across his face. "At least that way I don't get in trouble off either of them. Mum does cook my meals remember?" he quipped.

"Nice explanation there buddy," Hiccup said dryly, as Lennart howled with laughter, and Toothless made a low chuckle in his throat. "One would think that's the only reason you're going for your mother."

"That and she's an awesome player," Leif pointed out, just as Astrid landed another basket. "THAT'S THE WAY TO DO IT, MUM!"

Hiccup snorted. "You are a big suck up, buddy."

Tuning out of the conversation in front of him, Lennart returned his attention to the game, where he watched mother and daughter suddenly spot a sheep at the same time. Biting his lip nervously, Lennart watched as Siri veered off course, leaving the sheep open for her mother. He frowned. \_What was that girl planning?\_

Evidently everyone else was thinking that as well, as several Vikings ceased their cheering in order to silently watch the Haddock girl as she trailed behind her mother. Just as it seemed she was about to forfeit that one sheep, she suddenly shot up into the air in a blink of an eye, before zooming down on her mother from above; Night Star shooting spikes to distract the reigning champion, who started slightly and pulled Stormfly up in a sudden stop, allowing her beaming daughter to snatch the bewildered looking sheep and fly off towards the baskets.

"THAT'S HOW YOU DO IT, SEER!" Hiccup and Leif yelled proudly.

"WAY TO GO, SIRI!" Lennart called out cheerfully, as he frantically waved towards his friend, and seeing him, she happily waved at him back, just as she found Gerold in the crowd, and waving to him as well, he got up and whooped loudly, leading to Lennart and Leif to roll their eyes.

"Show off," both boys muttered in annoyance, as another of the players suddenly landed a basket, to the loud cheers of the crowd.

"Hey, Seer, why don't you give me a heart attack next time?!" Siri heard her mother yell towards her in amusement as she passed the teenager. "I thought I was going to jump out of my skin!"

"Sorry mum-" Siri grinned, "-but it was the only way to do it!"

"It was good either way, Seer!" Astrid admitted with a chuckle. "Keep it up!" and without a second glance, she flew off around the bend, lowering her eyes towards the ground. Following suit, Siri soon spotted a sheep, hidden well behind the well. Grinning to herself, Siri flew up behind the 16 to 18 year old player, keeping herself in the blind spot for both dragon and Viking as they went towards the elusive creature.

"She's so going to trick this guy," Lennart said in awe, watching as Siri made only but the simplest of moves. "That is so cool."

Everyone thought so too, and even the Vikings who were rooting for the young Viking she was following, suddenly ceased cheering and went silent in order to watch the scene play out. Hearing the cheering die down, the young man suddenly frowned and went to turn around, only to find nothing as Siri sneakily flew around the confused lad, and snatched the sheep straight in front of his eyes, before flying off towards the baskets, dumping the sheep to loud screams of "GO SIRI!"

"It's official, that girl has her own style," Lennart said, incredulously, as he flopped down on the seat in amazement. "That was so cool!"

"Now \_that\_" Snotlout said, impressed, "-was nothing like Astrid. That was awesome!"

"She has her own tricks up her sleeve, that one," another woman said nearby, cheerfully. "Just like a Haddock. You go, Siri!"

"GO SIRI, GO SIRI, GO SIRI!"

Pleased, Siri found herself flushed with happiness as a few flicker of comments reached her ears. \_It was about time\_! She thought gleefully, and with a new feeling of euphoria rushing through her body, Siri was soon going after the next several sheep; even if she did lose most of them.

"That's now 6 for Astrid!" Valka announced cheerfully to the crowd after half an hour's play. "Raynor trails with 4, Siri is on 3, followed by Ake and Kari on 1, with no points being achieved by Asta! With fifteen laps done, this game could end at any time!"

"They won't go on too much longer," Hiccup said. "They don't go further than 12 laps very often and the most we've ever played was 18."

"Siri has no chance now," Leif said dejectedly.

"I don't think she minds," Lennart chuckled, as he nodded towards the girl in question. "Look at her."

Following Lennart's line of sight, Leif laughed as he saw his sister, cheerfully taunting the 16 to 18 year old she tricked earlier. There was no sign that defeat was bothering her. Even when the horn blew to announce the black sheep's release did the smile never waver. Watching the creature sail over them like a hawk, Siri went after it at the quickest pace she could achieve, but was quickly outflown by the older players as they approached the small creature.

A quick flash of blue and suddenly it was all over. As people blinked a few times, the Vikings soon saw the image of their Cheiftainess sailing high above their heads in victory; black sheep held firmly under her arm. Astrid had won the competition for the third year in a row.

"GO ASTRID!" Hiccup cheered proudly, as he got up off his seat, and clapped as hard as he could with a three year old in his arms. "THAT'S HOW YOU DO IT!"

"GO MUMMY!" Ingrid called out to her, clapping her small hands as loud as she could.

"YOU DID GREAT MISS ASTRID!" Lennart and Kelda both yelled cheerfully.

"THAT'S 16 ALL UP!" Valka exclaimed gleefully. "ASTRID IS YOUR CHAMPION FOR THE THIRD YEAR IN A ROW!"

"ASTRID, ASTRID, ASTRID!"

Waving to the screaming crowd, Astrid quickly returned to the ground with the other players as the crowd began to spill out onto the ground with them, all cheering Astrid and the other's player's names. Squeezing his way through the crowd, Hiccup quickly snuck up behind his wife and picked her up, making in squeal in surprise.

"Congratulations milady," Hiccup grinned at her. "That was amazing as usual."

Astrid smiled at him. "Thanks, Hiccup," she said cheerfully as she suddenly captured Hiccup's lips in a soft kiss, making him close his eyes in pleasure, until Siri interrupted them.

"Gross, not in public,\_ again\_," she said, her face screwed up in disgust, before she grinned at her mother. "Awesome game, mum," she said, stepping forward to engulf her in a hug that Astrid gladly returned in a tight squeeze.

"You played brilliantly as well, sweetie. You should be proud of yourself. Coming third in isn't easy."

Siri smiled. "Well, I guess I learnt from the best, didn't I?"

"You're just trying to suck up," Astrid teased her daughter, before her face turned slightly serious. "And did you hear what everyone said about you today? They were very proud of you, and \_your\_ playing

style. I guess seeing as side by side playing let them see the differences."

"Let me see the differences, too, that's for sure," Hiccup chuckled, causing Siri's eyes to light up.

"Well, at least I know I was right!"

"Hey, Siri!"

Turning towards the sound of her name, Siri found herself grinning like a fool as she saw Gerold hurrying towards her, a wide smile stretched across his own face.

"You did great, Seer!" he exclaimed upon reaching her. "That trick you did where you snuck up on people before getting the sheep was genius!" As he spoke, Gerold's hands flew up in the air wildly, causing Night Star to suddenly emit a low squawk towards the older boy, eyeing him off dangerously. Flinching, Gerold jumped backwards.

"Night Star!" Siri exclaimed "surprised" - as she reached up a hand to calm the Nadder down, who immediately stopped eyeing the boy off, but the glare remained much to Siri's bewilderment. "Sorry, Gerold," she said apologetically, as she kept a warning hand on the dragon, "she must still be in the zone from the game. I've never seen her do that to anyone before." Looking up at the dragon, Siri sighed in relief as she saw her friend's expression return to its normal form, albeit a little wary. "Weird," Siri noted with a frown, "I've seen Len sneak up on her several times after a match and nothing." She shrugged. "Must be because she knows him."

"Probably," Gerold said, undeterred by the dragon's antics. "She doesn't know me that well yet. That might change though," he added with a smile towards Siri. "Do you want to go do something now, Seer or-?"

"Siri!" Lennart's voice echoed from behind, and Siri turned towards him, then back to Gerold, her face turning slightly apologetic as she did so. Catching the expression, Gerold shrugged with a grin.

"Go and celebrate with Len, we'll hang out later," he said, without a second thought.

Siri beamed. "Thanks, Gerold," she gratefully replied, as she stepped forward to give him a quick hug, a faint flush of red rising on her cheeks. "I'll see you later!" she called back to him as she raced off towards her friend, who broke into a proud grin as he saw her, before swiftly engulfing her in a hug of his own.

"That. Was. Awesome!" Lennart breathed incredulously. "Can you show me to play like that when I start?"

"Hey, don't steal my play!" Siri exclaimed, but the twinkle in her eyes gave her away, making Lennart and Leif chuckle, the latter grinning up at his sister.

"That was so cool, Seer!" Leif said proudly, as he squeezed his sister around her waist. "I wish I was old enough to play!"

"Got another six years yet, Leif," his sister reminded him with a laugh, making him groan in annoyance.

"Don't remind me."

"So, are we doing anything after this?" Lennart asked, as Siri turned her attention back to the boy. "I thought we'd be celebrating, that's all. Even if you didn't win, it's still awesome." His eyes suddenly focused on Gerold, still standing nearby, now with his sister. "Is he coming?" he asked Siri, with no hint of annoyance in his tone, although his face showed some disappointment.

Siri shook her head as she flicked her eyes over to the fourteen year old. "No, I said we'll do something later," she said, returning her gaze back to the conversation at hand. "I think we're doing something anyway," she added with a frown. "I might need to go and askâ€|"

"Siri!" her mother suddenly called, and turning towards her mother, she saw that the other four players were getting back onto their dragons. "Hey, Seer," Astrid said as she reached her, "it's tradition after the final match for the other five players to do a lap of honour for everyone before we go the congratulatory feast. Do you want to go and join in or-?"

"I'll go!" Siri cut in before her mother finished; enthusiasm radiating from every part of her body as she quickly jumped up onto Night Star's saddle. "Thanks mum!"

"I don't think you needed to ask," Lennart noted with an amused tone. "If it involves attention, she'll do it."

"I thought it was more polite to ask," Astrid chuckled as she watched her daughter join the other four players to the loud cheers of the waiting crowd. Without lowering his gaze from the scene above him, Hiccup joined up with his wife, with a quick flash of a smile towards her.

"She is still like you in a few ways, you know," Hiccup told her with a grin, leading her to raise her eyebrows at him.

"Don't let her catch you saying that," Astrid warned him. "I don't want another incident on our handsâ€|" She trailed off with a slight frown. "I \_would \_like to know where or even who gave her the idea of the sneak attack, though. That was awesomeâ€|umâ€|what in the name of Thor is she doing?!"

Eyebrows narrowed, Hiccup quickly glanced up at the lap of honour again as pockets of amused chattering and laughter began to break out through the watching crowd. His jaw dropped.

"What the heck?!-"

Siri was standing, very wobbly, on Night Star's back, a wide smile etched onto her face. But it wasn't that had the crowd in stitches of hilarity, it was the little jig she was performing while standing on said dragon. Her hips were moving back and forth in a sort of invisible rhythm and she bobbing her head up and down in such a jarring way, it gave Hiccup a headache just watching.



"And here I thought she couldn't dance," Astrid said, tears of laughter filling her eyes as she turned to Hiccup. "Who on earth did she get that from?!"

"Nobody," Hiccup answered in delight, as he watched his daughter's performance. "That's her own thing."

\* \* \*

><p><em>You have no idea how long I'd been planning that last part lol! It's been an image in my head for weeks! Siri is very nerdy when she wants to be, which is kind of cute. <em>

So, that's the end of this storyline. Siri definitely went through some stuff this chapter and as a teenager, it's something that will happen often now. I know it seemed Siri changed her mind fairly quickly, and she sort of did, but she was already feeling bad for what she did and she's smart enough to realise her parents were right, even if she didn't want to admit it. Siri's dirty play though may have surprised some people though! I'm not sure if any of you guessed how far she would have taken it!\_

The Gerold and Lennart thing is really in full swing now too and I'm looking forward to people's reviews about who they like better for Siri, but please don't let that be the only thing people talk about  
:p I threw a few interesting clues as the plot in this chapter too, so if you noticed the, kudos to you! This whole Len, Siri and Gerold thing will also **\*\*NOT\*\*** turn into some drawn out annoying love triangle between the three of them. That isn't the plan. Plus Len isn't the type of character to stand in the way of someone who could possibly be a 'better' match if he thinks that's the case, so no love**\*\* triangles\*\***, but I didn't say anything about there being no love **\*\*dramas\*\***. You'll just have to wait and see. I can't wait to get further into the teenage years for Siri. \_

Ok, so next chapter will be all about Leif! (With some Hiccup and Astrid thrown in) I've been planning this story for a little while, but with Siri growing up, she had to take centre stage for awhile, but now it's Leif's turn. **\*\*When Leif\*\*\_\_\*\*is teased\*\*\_\_\*\*for being\*\*\_\_\*\*a clumsy dragon know it all, he thinks being different to everyone sucks. Until his father takes him on a trip to study different dragons. \*\*\_\_Now, I haven't given away much, but I'm really looking forward to this chapter, Leif is both very similar, yet very different to his father and I'm finally going to be able to showcase that! (Although I have shown a bit about him!) Next chapter will also have some steamy Hiccup and Astrid moments. No lemon, as I can't write that sort of stuff well, but close to it. I know a few people have wanted more moments between them. Siri won't be seen in this chapter at all as I think it's time for her to take a step back for a bit, although she will be mentioned. Ingrid will have a storyline of her own soon too. Now, I'm going to take a break for the rest of the month so my boyfriend can finish his teaching prac, and I can recover from a cold that some students gave me at work the other day, but then it'll be back to writing regularly again! (I hope). The next chapter should be up sometime in June, quickly followed by the next one if I things go to plan. Next chapter will take place a few months after this storyline.**

OK, \_\_\*\*DON'T FORGET TO REVIEW! \*\*\_\_Once again,\_\_\*\* NO FLAMES  
**\*\*\_\_will be tolerated, but\_\_\*\* KIND \*\*\_\_constructive criticism is**

accepted. \_

\_Thanks for reading! :D\_

\_Before I go, I also want to ask for suggestions on a sibling storyline between the three Haddock kids. There is some intense stuff coming up with Siri when she's about 15 and I want some family stuff before that happens. I loved the idea of a sibling storyline suggested to me by one of my regular reviewers, 444teme444, (thanks!) but I'm sure what to do. If anyone has any ideas, please suggest one in reviews or PM me. It would be nice to show something like that. Just please do not suggest anything dark or nasty is all I ask. Even one where they're fighting and have to work something out would be great! Thanks again!\_

### 39. Chapter 39: In Dragons We Discover

\_Yes, I know it's been 6 weeks, guys and for that I am so sorry! I do have a reason, though and the simple fact of the matter is that I just simply haven't had the time. It's the middle of winter over here and with all the illness going around, I've had A LOT of work, with casual teachers like myself being called in almost every day. I was out sick myself just after my last chapter was posted. With all the work I've been getting, I just simply haven't had the time I used to have to write. Its school holidays for a few weeks now and I wrote the entire second half of this chapter in the last week alone because I only now have a bit more time. \_

\_Ok, so as promised, this chapter is entirely based around Leif, with no hint of Siri at all, although she's mentioned. You really see Leif's personality start to shine through in this chapter and it will start to develop more from here on in, as well as some nice moments between father and son. This chapter takes place only a few months after my previous chapter. \_

\_This chapter also has some steamy moments between Hiccup and Astrid in this chapter, at the beginning and near the end too. It stops long before we really go into detail, but it's still steamy, so be warned if you're a younger reader. I know some people have been wanting some more moments between them, and to be honest, so did I. I never realised how tricky these scenes are to write, though, so don't expect them all the time! :p\_

\_For those people who haven't had a chance or haven't watched Race to the Edge yet either, I have a couple of tiny hints to it in the chapter, especially with some of the facts on dragons, but there are no spoilers. Just saying it for those readers who will pick it up.\_

\_Ok, on with the chapter! \_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 39 â€" In Dragons We Discover<span>

\* \* \*

><p>The silence in the Haddock household was deafening. Restless, Hiccup moved his position for what felt like the hundredth time at

his desk, his eyes scanning the empty room, only to find Astrid, comfortably stretched out like a cat on the wooden sofa, nose buried deep in a book. Unlike him she was perfectly comfortable, Hiccup noted. He changed his position again.<p>

"Would you stop it?" Astrid hissed at him, making her husband jump. "You sound like you have ants in your pants. Or a whole heap of Terrible Terrors the way you're moving," she added with a narrowed eye towards Hiccup's restless form, who sighed as he looked over towards his wife.

"I can't help it; this place is so...\_quiet.\_"

"That's what happens when there are no kids around to bother you," Astrid replied dryly, returning her attention to the book in her hands.

"Where are the kids anyway?" Hiccup asked her, perplexed. "I've \_never\_ seen them all go out at once."

"Siri and Gerold are off helping Lennart with some dragon racing stuff, Ingrid is having a sleep over at Idony's tonight, and Leif is off with Kelda, I think." Seeing the stunned expression on her husband's face, Astrid chuckled. "I know," she said. "Quiet isn't it?"

"You could say that again," Hiccup muttered. "It's not normal. It's usually...um-"

"Chaos?" Astrid suggested, raising her eyes to meet her husband's. "Loud screaming? Bangs every few seconds?" Astrid chuckled. "Well, I don't know about you, but I'd enjoy it if I were you. I certainly am. Well," she added with a frown towards Hiccup's twitchy leg, "\_trying\_ \_too\_ anyway."

Hiccup grinned at her sheepishly. "Sorry," he apologised, as he stood up. "I guess I'm not used to having time to myself anymore. What are we supposed to \_do\_?" he asked with a laugh, as he looked around the empty room where discarded toys littered the floor.

"If you're really bored, you could do the house work for me," Astrid suggested with a mischievous glint in her eye. "I mean, if you \_really\_ can't think of anything else better to do..."

"Oh, and I take it that you do, milady?" Hiccup grinned, causing Astrid's playful smirk to widen. "Of course, it's hard to tell anything with that cheeky grin you seem to have." He reached up to tuck a stray piece of hair behind Astrid's ear, his grin widening. "What \_did\_ you have in mind?"

Astrid smirked. "Oh, I don't know," she drawled slowly, "maybe a bit of chiefly duties around the village. You know? Do some work; maybe call a meeting, everything we should be doing as leaders. \_Or\_, " she continued, giggling at the horrified look that etched itself onto her husband's face, "we \_could\_ \_take\_ advantage of the fact that the house at present is a kid's free zone. Because to me-" she etched closer to Hiccup's flushed form, "-that sounds like a \_much\_ better idea."

"Oh really, milady?" Hiccup asked her, as he tauntingly stepped back from her, "and just what are you going to do...humph!" Hiccup's eyes

suddenly widened as Astrid quickly seized him by the arms, roughly pulling him to her lips in one swift movement before Hiccup even knew what was happening. A squeak of surprise emitted from the Chief's throat, before his brain caught up to the moment, and in the next instant, his arms were wrapped around Astrid's small frame, pulling her towards the couch, causing her to emit a small squeak of her own as they landed with a loud\_ thump\_ against its wooden surface.

"H...Hiccup," she breathed quietly, as Hiccup's hands began to gently stroke down her back. "We can't do this here."

"Has that ever stopped us before?" Hiccup chuckled quietly, as his hands gently travelled up his wife's back in a soft caress, causing her to shiver in pleasure, despite her concerns.

"Well...no," she admitted with a slight flush at the memory. "But that was a\_ long\_ time ago...and...and what if we get caught?" she protested, albeit half-heartedly as she felt Hiccup's breath upon her own lips as he leant closer towards her.

"The doors locked, Astrid," Hiccup replied, without glancing up, as he began to stroke the sensitive skin around her neck. "Besides, like you said, the kids are all out."

"I did say that, didn't I?" she murmured as Hiccup's hands ghosted up her neck, travelling the curve of her head, before burying themselves into her blonde hair, effectively cutting off all conversation, as he untied her blonde locks from their plaited prison.

Tendrils of straw-coloured hair fell into a mass around her shoulders, tickling Hiccup's face as she captured his lips with hers once again, all the while keeping his fingers tangled in her golden tresses.

Feeling Hiccup's mouth hot against hers, Astrid's brain slowly became fuzzy as she wound her arms around Hiccup's neck, reaching up to twirl a piece of auburn hair around her finger as she slowly began to lose all train of thought...

"YOU ARE SUCH AN IDIOT!"

"I AM NOT AN \_IDIOT! \_STOP CALLING ME THAT!"

Startled at the noise, Hiccup and Astrid quickly jumped apart, their hearts beating a million miles an hour as Hiccup had to quickly right himself to avoid being dumped unceremoniously on the floor by the sudden movement. Breathing heavily, he quickly sat up, a frown crossing his lips.

"What in Thor's name was that?!" he exclaimed, straining his ears to listen to the commotion outside, in which the yelling was rapidly increasing in volume.

"FOR THE SON OF A DRAGON TRAINER, YOU HAVE NO CLUE WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT!"

"I DO TOO! YOU GUYS ARE JUST IDIOTS!"

"Is that Leif?" Astrid said, a tone of surprise in her voice, before

she quickly got to her feet and raced over to the door, where she wrenched back the bolt, before hurrying out, Hiccup close to her heels. Squinting to see her son's auburn hair, she quickly spotted it, along with several other figures at the bottom of the hill where their house stood. None of them were Leif's age, and that prospect caused a ball to form in the pit of Astrid's stomach.

"\_WE'RE\_ THE IDIOTS?" one voice, which was clearly an older boy's, echoed up the hill, making Astrid's stomach clench. "WE'RE NOT THE ONES RUNNING AROUND LIKE WE KNOW EVERYTHING!"

"I'M NOT EITHER, I WAS TRYING TO HELP!"

"What on earth is going on down there?" Glancing up from the commotion below, Hiccup threw his wife an uneasy look. "I thought Leif was with Kelda? Why's he with this lot?"

"I don't know, but-"

"HELPING?!" An irritated voice sneered up the hill, effectively cutting off Astrid's response. "YOU CALL \_THAT\_ HELPING, KNOW IT ALL!"

"I AM \_NOT\_ A KNOW IT ALL!" Leif screamed back, his voice raising a few octaves.

"Do you think we should break this up?" Hiccup asked hesitantly as he moved forward, uncertain on what to do. But before he could make a decision, the argument reached fever pitch.

"YOU'RE RIGHT, YOU'RE NOT A KNOW IT ALL. YOU'RE AN IDIOT, WHO THINKS THAT HE IS!"

"I AM NOT...YOU...YOU \_DREKI'S BACRAUT\_!"

A stunned silence fell among the group of boys as the offensive words pierced the air. A few collective gasps filled the air from a few villagers standing nearby, as well as a few tentative snickers, mainly from Gobber who was sniggering, despite himself. On top of the hill, Hiccup and Astrid's mouths fell open in astonishment having heard their son's unexpected response. Wide eyed, Astrid turned her gaze towards her husband, who looked back at her in equal bewilderment.

"Where did he learn \_that\_?"

"Well, don't look at me," Astrid replied defensively, throwing her hands up as she struggled to keep a laugh, despite her dismay. "I didn't teach it to him!"

"Well, \_I\_ certainly didn't," Hiccup replied, with a shake of his head. "Although the anger issues \_do\_ come from you," he added with a grin in his wife's direction. "Ow!" He rubbed his arm as the Viking warriors fist came into contact with his arm. "I rest my case," he chuckled, looking back to the village square just in time to see Leif, face bright red with anger, running at breakneck speed towards the direction of the cove.

"Leif!" Hiccup frantically yelled after him, as he went to take off after him, before quickly stopping and turning back to face his

wife.

"I better go and see what that was all about," he explained. "If I know Leif, he'll be stewing until someone talks to him."

"Yeah, you better," Astrid said, with a deep sigh. Glancing over at the boys, still standing there in shock, she suddenly grinned. "I'll just have a talk with these guys shall I?"

"Might as well," Hiccup grinned. "You are the Cheiftainess after all. They won't want to mess with you." Glancing around, he suddenly leaned in closer to Astrid. "Think we could continue our little session later, milady?" he asked mischievously, as he kissed the tip of her ear.

Astrid winked playfully. "I'll be waiting," she replied. "Now go find our hot head before you lose him. I'll deal with this lot," she said, as she made her way over to the group of boys, who were just now regaining their wits about them.

"You know, there's one thing I still don't understand," Hiccup said, brows furrowed as he made his way in the direction Leif disappeared in.

"What's that?" Astrid asked him, perplexed.

"Out of all the insults Leif could have thrown at those jerks, why on earth did he choose 'dragon's arse'?"

\* \* \*

><p>"Who knew a seven year old could move so <em>fast<em>?" Hiccup huffed, as he stumbled over a few rocks in his path, heading towards the cove.

Having caught up to his son earlier easily, Hiccup had decided to slow his pace, and follow the boy at a distance to see what the lad did. It had quickly become apparent, though, that this was a huge mistake when Leif's energetic legs had soon outnumbered Hiccup's one good leg, and before long the 35 year old was struggling to keep up with him.

Plainly Leif wasn't in a temper, judging by the casual way he jumped over rocks "so likely he had just needed an escape, Hiccup thought as he huffed his way through the trees, Toothless sauntering his way beside him. But what had caused this need for escape in the first place was what was plaguing on the father's mind just as the cove came in to his line of sight.

Having just reached the entrance that led down into the cove, Leif casually hopped down and slid down the rock underneath him, before making his way determinedly across the grassy ravine. Where was he heading?

"What in Thor's name happened to make you walk this far, buddy?" Hiccup wondered quietly to himself, making Toothless emit a low coo in agreement with his friend, as Viking and dragon gently hopped down the entrance after the young boy.

Leif was just on the other side of the pond as he entered the wide

grassed area that had once been his own safe haven. The young Viking's auburn hair caught in the sunlight and flashed like a beacon across the water, before disappearing as a patch of sun went behind a patch of clouds and the young boy vanished from sight.

"Leif!" Hiccup bellowed, worriedly, not caring in the least if he sounded worried or angry. "Leif, where did you go?!"

"I'm here, daddy." Leif's voice drifted out from a patch of trees, and Hiccup edged closer to see his son looking back at him with a sheepish grin. "I knew you were following me."

"If you knew I was following you, why didn't you slow down for an old cripple?" Hiccup joked wearily as he came to a stop beside the seven year old. "It would have saved me the effort."

Leif giggled. "Sorry, daddy." Sitting down next to his father and Toothless, though, his smile soon vanished as he emitted a huge sigh. "I...I just wanted to get away from those jerks."

"Speaking of those jerks," Hiccup started carefully, as he watched Leif pick up a rock and throw it heatedly into the water, "would you care to tell me what happened there, buddy?"

Emitting a loud sigh, Leif brought his legs up to rest his arms upon. "They called me a know-it-all."

"Yes, I heard that," Hiccup said patiently. "But why did they call you that? You weren't being a know-it-all, were you?" Hiccup asked him, brows furrowed.

"No!" Leif exclaimed, a little too loudly, causing Hiccup to raise his eyebrows. "Well, I wasn't meaning to be. I was just trying to help."

"What with?" Hiccup asked him, gently, as he brought an arm around the young boy's shoulders.

Taking a deep breath, Leif blew out his cheeks, before sighing in resignation. Obviously his father wasn't going to leave him alone until he found out what had happened.

"Well, I was going over to Kelda's when I passed the older boys," Leif explained, eyes firmly on the ground. "They were having trouble with a wild Gronkle, and I mean trouble," Leif added with a snigger, recalling the situation. "They kept screaming like little girls every time they got near it-!"

"Leif!" Hiccup didn't raise his voice, but the tone of his voice made it quite clear that he was to be obeyed. Realising this, Leif fell silent for a moment, before glancing back up to his father.

"Sorry, dad."

"Just tell me why you got into an argument, Leif. I don't need to know what happened before," Hiccup explained patiently.

Leif nodded. "Well, they kept going near it with their eyes half-closed," Leif explained, "and they were getting nowhere, so I thought I'd step in and help. Like you do!" he added with a wide grin

towards his dad. "You always help."

"Because it's my job," Hiccup pointed out to the young boy. "I've worked with dragons for years, whereas you haven't. Is that what annoyed the boys so much? Because you tried to help?"

Leif nodded silently, looking down at his shoes. "I went over and asked them if they needed help, and they just looked at me and told me to go away."

"And you didn't?"

Leif shook his head. "I went over to the Gronkle myself and tried to explain what to do to the other boys."

Hiccup frowned. "And?"

"And according to them, I did the wrong thing," Leif scoffed in annoyance, a flush rising in his cheeks as he spoke. "I went to touch the Gronkle and she growled at me. So I tried a few more times."

"Using the same methods?"

"No," Leif replied. "I went in from behind after a few goes, and said that was the best way to do it. But when I reached her, she..." Leif trailed off for a moment, as the flush in his cheeks rose higher. "She tried to attack me and before the boys could do anything, she'd flown off. That's when they started yelling at me," Leif added as Hiccup went to open his mouth.

"For just trying to help?" Hiccup felt an answering flush rise in his cheeks as annoyance pulsed through his body.

"They said I was an idiot!" Looking up at his father, Hiccup saw, with a slight jolt to the stomach, that tears of anger and embarrassment were started to well up in his son's eyes. "They told me everything I did was wrong for a Gronkle and that I should have kept my big nose out of it if I had no clue what I was doing!" Sniffling loudly, Leif reached up and fiercely rubbed at the wetness on his cheeks. "They said I was stupid and that I would never make a dragon trainer like you. I didn't know I was doing it wrong, daddy," Leif told his father tearfully. "I was only trying to help and they yelled at me. I didn't mean to act like a know-it-all."

"Did you tell them that?" Hiccup asked him gently, as he placed a comforting arm around his son's shoulders and gathered the young boy to him. "Or didn't they want to listen?"

Leif shook his head, emitting a great sniff in the process.

"They didn't want to listen. They just kept yelling at me, saying I was trying to be a know-it-all and that I was an idiot. So I got mad," Leif admitted with a slight blush of embarrassment as he recalled the phrase he'd used on the older boys.

"Yeah, about that buddy," Hiccup spoke up, unable to contain a grin that was tugging at the corners of his mouth. "Why of all things did you call them that?"



Despite the dejected expression on his son's face, the mention of the earlier incident brought a slight grin to his son's lips.

"Well, we were talking about dragons," Leif pointed out, like it was the most obvious thing in the world. "It just made sense at the time. Am I in trouble?" he asked his father nervously, as he looked into his father's amused expression. "I know I said something bad."

"No, you're not in trouble, buddy," Hiccup assured him, with a slight chuckle. "But, you're right. You shouldn't have said it," he added sternly seeing Leif's surprised expression. Hearing this, though, his face fell slightly. "You know better than to swear at someone who makes you mad. If I did that, the whole village would get it from me every day!"

"I know," Leif sighed, as he glanced down at the grass underneath his feet. "I was just really mad and it just...slipped out."

Hiccup shook his head, fighting back the urge to laugh, as well as a small amount of anger towards the group of boys all at once. "I'd just like to know where you got that certain expression from in the first place, young man," Hiccup asked, folding his arms in front of him. "Because it wasn't from me, that's for sure."

"I know," Leif said with a wide grin. "I got it from mummy. You really should tell her that I can still hear her when she's muttering under her breath at home, daddy."

"And here I thought your sister was the cheeky one," Hiccup joked. "Just you wait now, buddy. I'll make sure your mother doesn't give you any more ideas from now on!"

The grin never slipping from his lips, Leif shrugged. "I hear a lot more than that from the rest of the village, daddy. It's not just mummy."

"Remind me to have a talk with the village when I get the chance," Hiccup said dryly, making Leif chuckle under his breath. "It's no wonder half of the village kids are swearing before they hit 10. Or in your case, 8," Hiccup added with a sigh.

"Well, it helped me out," Leif pointed out in delight, as he giggled at his dad's horrified expression. "Did you see them as I left, daddy?" Leif asked his father, his face filled with amusement. "They looked like the Nightmare had got them!"

"More like a couple of them," Hiccup sniggered as he recalled the frozen forms of the boys. "I didn't think they were ever going to move!"

"Did they before you left?" Leif asked him, curiously.

Hiccup frowned thoughtfully. "I don't think so," he said slowly. "But considering your mother was going to have a 'talk' with them-" Hiccup made quotation marks in the air as he uttered this, all the while, trying to keep a straight face, "-I don't think they would have for long."

"Awww," Leif drawled disappointedly. "I was hoping I could trick

them later on. Well, play small pranks on them," he added quickly, seeing his father's bemused expression, who chuckled at the suggestion.

"I know your idea of tricks, buddy, and we both know they're not small," Hiccup grinned, as he ruffled his son's messy auburn hair. "You, Kelda and Eric spend way too much time together. But then again," Hiccup continued thoughtfully, as Leif's smile wavered, "you've been a cheeky little thing since the day you were born. The amount of crying you did was enough to drive anyone up the wall! And you've certainly annoyed Siri since you could talk..."

His smile fading, Leif's lowered his bright emerald eyes back to the ground, causing Hiccup to stop mid-sentence with a frown. What had he said?

"Leif, are you ok?" Hiccup asked the seven year old gently, pulling him over to his embrace. Leif sighed, before glancing up to meet his father's own emerald eyes.

"Do you think that's why those boys called me stupid?" the young boy asked his father sadly. "Because I act like an idiot so much?"

"Leif!" Hiccup exclaimed in surprise. "You don't act like an idiot! Where in Thor's name did you get that idea?"

Leif shrugged. "You just said that me, Kelda and Eric are always being silly," Leif said quietly; so quietly that Hiccup, who was right beside the boy had to strain to hear him. "What if I'll never be good with dragons because I always act silly?"

"You are not silly, Leif, you're just cheeky, and there's a huge difference between being cheeky and silly," Hiccup assured his son softly. "Plus you are good with dragons. You're good with Mossy..."

"Because he's mine," Leif argued, dejectedly, as he looked up at his father with a tearful expression. "I couldn't help with that Gronkle. I made it mad at me."

Heaving a great sigh, Hiccup glanced back down at his son, determined to get his point across to the troubled young boy. "Leif, you're only seven years old. Of course you're silly. Every child is silly! Heck," Hiccup added with a slight chuckle, "I don't think I've met a seven year old yet that isn't. Or that is an expert in dragons, for that matter," Hiccup added firmly, causing a small ghost of a smile to form on the young boy's lips. "Yeah, alright, you messed up with the advice you gave, but that doesn't mean you won't one day be better at dragons than me. You're just learning. Although, in saying that," Hiccup continued, frowning thoughtfully, "you shouldn't have acted like you knew what you were doing when you are still learning."

"Well, I thought I did," Leif pointed out quietly. "I just thought it would have been something you'd do, daddy. I guess it was a silly thing to do, though," he sighed, as he threw a sheepish glance towards his father. "I wasn't trying to be a know-it-all, though. No matter what those dr-"

"Say it and you'll be grounded for the next month," Hiccup told him, casting his son a look of warning, quickly stopping the young boy in his tracks as a guilty grin crossed his face.

"Sorry, daddy."

"I don't care if you're mad at them or not, Leif, I don't want to hear that type of language from you \_or\_ your sisters, is that understood?"

Leif nodded. "Yes, dad," he said quietly. "I just wish I'd never tried to help," he added with a soft sigh. "Now everyone is going to call me a know-it-all."

Hiccup sat silent, eyes half-focused on the water, one hand scratching his chin, the other around his son's shoulders.

"Daddy? What should I do?" Leif asked as he turned to face his father. Hiccup stayed silent and thoughtful for a second, before a smile crept onto his face from his cheeks as an idea suddenly seeped into his brain.

"Dad? What's up?" Leif's voice cut through the haze of Hiccup's thoughts, and startled slightly, Hiccup glanced down at his son's perplexed expression, the smile on his face growing wider as he did so.

"What would you say if I took you for some firsthand dragon lessons? Just you and me?"

Leif's eyes lit up. "You'd do that?" he asked the older Viking, his voice tinged with excitement.

"Well, you said you hate not knowing enough about dragons," Hiccup said with a smile. "So, what better way than taking you on a few outings? Besides, Kelda knows more than you and Siri put together because of Fishlegs' first hand lessons!" Hiccup added with a laugh. "We can go around and study different species first hand so you \_can\_ help next time someone needs it. Basically, anyway," Hiccup added as Leif opened his mouth to speak. "You'll start your \_actual\_ dragon lessons when you're ten. I'm just giving you a head start," Hiccup grinned.

That would be awesome, dad!" Leif exclaimed gleefully, as he flung his arms around his father's waist tightly. "Thank you, thank you, thank you!" Letting go of his dad, he grinned mischievously. "Do you think I could use this to play a prank on those guys, daddy?"

"This isn't the reason I'm doing this for you, buddy," Hiccup told him gently, as he placed an arm around his son's shoulders. "I'm doing this to help you next time you get into a situation like this." Seeing his son's crestfallen look, though, Hiccup frowned thoughtfully, before throwing his son a small grin. "Well, I guess playing a joke on them wouldn't \_hurt\_, " Hiccup agreed with a slight twinkle in his own bright green eyes, making Leif giggle. "I mean, it wouldn't be the first time I've used this sort of thing to get back at someone."

"Can you take me now?" Leif asked eagerly, as he pulled on his father's hand.

"Now?" Hiccup asked, his mind split in indecision between returning to the nice, kid-free house and his waiting wife, or, staying with his son a little longer to help him prank the kids that had been teasing him later on. The father could not bear his son's doe-eyes and downcast expression, though - mouth slamming shut mid-sentence. His stomach churned, his toes curled and the hair on the back of his neck prickled; he'd never let his son down like that. Not when he needed him, and especially not now. His brain sighing a little, a wide smile rose on his face.

"Oh, why not?" Hiccup said, with a grin. "It's not like it's late anyway."

"Yes!" Leif exclaimed, as he rushed over to Toothless, who squatted down in order to help the young human climb onto his saddle. "You're the best, daddy!"

Hiccup grinned. "And don't you forget it either, buddy."

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><p>"So, what dragons will we study first?" Leif asked enthusiastically, as he wildly looked around at the ground beneath him. "A Scauldron? A Changewing?-" Leif's eyes lit up with a sudden thought. "What about a Boneknapper?!"<p>

"A Boneknapper?" Hiccup laughed, as he quickly glanced back at his overeager son as they flew around the island. "How much time have you been spending with Uncle Gobber lately, Leif?"

Leif frowned, bewildered. "Why is that important?"

Hiccup shook his head; a smile twitching at his lips. "Oh, nothing really, buddy," Hiccup chuckled. "It's just that Uncle Gobber is the only Viking interested in the Boneknapper. Plus we haven't seen one in years, for that matter," Hiccup added with a slight frown.

"Yeah, I thought Uncle Gobber was a little crazy with that dragon," Leif admitted with an embarrassed laugh. "Too bad though; I've always wanted to see one."

"You and your sister both," Hiccup said, turning his gaze back to the scene in front of him. "But I'm not about to go searching for one just so you can see one, I'm afraid." Glancing down towards the ground, though, Hiccup's smile suddenly widened. "But I can show you another rare dragon," he said, pointing a finger below him. "How does a Typhoomerang sound to you?"

Leif's eyes lit up. "A Typhoomerang!" he exclaimed elatedly, whipping his eyes down to the ground where said dragon was loitering around a group of trees down on the ground. Leif's eyes widened in delight as he observed the Typhoomerang's movements. "Oh, that is so cool!" Tearing his eyes away from the large figure below him, Leif glanced wide eyed at his father. "Can we go down and look at him?" he asked him hopefully.

"We will be," Hiccup said, as Toothless gave a low coo of warning. "Settle down, bud," Hiccup assured the Night Fury, before he turned his attention to his son, waiting patiently behind him. "We're going

down, buddy, but we won't be getting too close. Typhoomerang's can be quite dangerous in the wild, and I want you to promise me you won't do anything stupid."

Leif nodded sincerely. "I promise, daddy."

With a reassured nod, Hiccup gently tapped Toothless' head. "Take us down, bud. Carefully," he added in afterthought as Toothless banked a little too close to the bulking creature. Hearing this, the Night Fury quickly swooped around the trees in effort to avoid the dragon's detection, causing Leif's heart to skip a beat in anticipation. The seven year old had never been so close to a dragon this size before, and it was exhilarating for the young boy as he watched the dragon's large frame glide aimlessly through the forest of trees.

"Wow," Leif uttered under his breath, as he swung a leg over the saddle to hop off, only to lose his balance in the process, and fall face down onto the spongy grass beneath him. Only Leif could make dismounting a dragon look dangerous.

"Ow."

"Be careful, buddy," Hiccup said quietly, as he glanced over at the Typhoomerang, which was still heading in the opposite direction, to his relief. "We don't want to alert other dragons we're here if necessary." Bending down in front of his son, Hiccup smiled. "You okay, Leif?"

"All good," Leif grinned, as he took his father's hand reaching out towards him. "Mummy said I can't go a day without falling or tripping over \_something.\_"

"I believe it," Hiccup chortled, watching as the seven year old picked himself up like nothing had happened. "Just try to be more careful, though, or Toothless will be using his Alpha powers more then he cares to use them."

"Not that that wouldn't be cool," Leif giggled as Toothless checked him over protectively.

"Let's try to avoid it, though, huh?" Hiccup smiled, watching as Leif playfully swatted Toothless's inquisitive nose away. He glanced back to the Typhoomerang quickly. "Let's get going, before it gets too far," Hiccup said, glancing his gaze back to his son, who nodded fervently, before quickly following his father and Toothless towards the large towering dragon nearby. Stopping at a safe distance as the dragon stopped to observe its surroundings, Hiccup quickly turned his attention back to his son.

"Okay," he whispered, casting his eyes back to the dragon warily. "So what do you know about the Typhoomerang, Leif? Do you know anything about them?"

"I know why they're named like they are," Leif replied quietly, holding onto a tree trunk so he didn't fall into its path. "Because it spins like a typhoon and comes back like a boomerang. Oh, and it's the only dragon that eats eels," he added quickly.

"Well done," Hiccup said proudly, causing a wide grin to spread across the boy's face. "Now let me show you what happens when they

\_do\_ spin." Nodding to the dragon, he pointed to the way the dragon was positioning itself. "It's about to leave," Hiccup said quickly. "Now just watch what it does."

Crouching warily behind a shrub, one hand steadying himself on Toothless' back, Leif watched with wide eyes as the Typhoomerang suddenly ignited itself, before beginning to spin wildly towards the air, causing sparks of fire to fly in all directions. Jumping slightly as one flew past his head, Leif continued to watch in awe as the dragon launched itself into the air, and disappeared without a trace, leaving its trademark burn mark in its place.

"That was so cool!" Leif exclaimed wildly, as he jumped up out the bushes. "Is that the \_only\_ dragon that does that?" he asked his dad, as they rushed over to observe the burn mark.

"Only one we've seen," Hiccup replied, as he crouched next to the mark, "and we've seen \_a lot\_ of dragons in our time. Now, Leif," Hiccup continued, as he gestured to the charred ground in front of them, "what can you observe with this burn mark?"

Looking down at the mark, Leif's brows furrowed in thought as his eyes wandered over every inch of it, before he gazed back up to his father with a slight sheepish grin.

"That it took off pretty far into the air?" Leif guessed awkwardly, his face burning in embarrassment.

Hiccup chuckled. "No," he said with a smile, "but that's not a bad answer. No, the mark shows you the size and age of the Typhoomerang in question, as well as the direction the dragon was headed. So," Hiccup said with a grin, as he nodded to the mark, "what can you see in that?"

Frowning thoughtfully, Leif crouched lower to the ground and ran a gentle hand over the scorched earth, before his lips turned up in a small smile. "That the dragon was about 10 years old?" Leif guessed hopefully, before his eyes flicked back down to it. "And it went west?" He pointed to the direction of the spirals. "You know...because the spirals are going east?" he asked his father nervously, who beamed proudly back at him.

"That's almost exactly right, Leif!" Hiccup exclaimed cheerfully, as he pulled the seven year old closer. "The spirals go in the opposite direction to where the dragon is headed! Only thing is that the dragon is probably closer to five. They grow \_really\_ \_quickly," he added as Leif's eyes widened in surprise. "See," Hiccup said as Leif grinned happily, "you're not silly after all. Not many people know all of \_that\_."

Leif smiled. "Thanks, dad," he said joyfully, as he looked back down at the burn mark, where his brow narrowed slightly. "Hey, daddy," he said curiously, as he flicked his eyes in the direction the dragon had left. "What happens when one of them eats eels? Wouldn't it just make them sick too?"

"Oh, you'd think that considering everything," Hiccup said as he awkwardly rubbed his neck. "But let's just say your Uncle Fishlegs learnt \_that\_ lesson the hard way."

"Why, what happened?" Leif asked him eagerly, as Toothless beside him shuddered at the memory of what happened that day.

"He almost got blown out of the sky by a powerful Typhoomerang, after it ate an eel." Hiccup shuddered at the thought. "That's one dragon you do not want to be around at full strength, and no," he added quickly seeing Leif's eager expression, "I'm not showing you. I am never going back to Eel Island." Toothless growled. "And neither is Toothless," Hiccup added.

Seeing the look on Toothless' face, Leif giggled. "Fair enough, daddy," Leif said, before he pushed himself off the ground. "So, where are we going next?" he asked eagerly. "This is cool!"

"To whatever we can find," Hiccup replied cheerfully, as he gave the seven year old a leg up onto Toothless' saddle. "It's not like there's a shortage of dragons in this place."

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><p>"So, what have we learnt about the Thunderdrum, Leif?" Hiccup asked his son, who was vigorously tapping his ear.<p>

"Never sneak up on one from behind," Leif replied with a shudder, before shaking his head wildly. "Or you'll get deafened from scaring them," he added, banging at his ear once more. "How come no one told me Thunderdrums can't hear well?" he asked his father in irritation. "That would have been useful to know!"

"I wanted you to figure it out for yourself," Hiccup chuckled lightly, as he placed a comforting arm around his son's shoulders. "Don't worry; your hearing will be back soon, buddy. Just give it time," he said, seeing Leif continuing to shake his head.

"It is back," Leif replied, as he put a finger in his ear. "It's just ringing, that's all. It's really annoying."

"Why do you think Thunderdrums have such a loud wail if they can't hear very well, Leif?" Hiccup asked the seven year old, trying to get his mind off the ringing noises in his ear.

"For protection?" Leif cleverly guessed, finally removing the finger from his ear. "If they can't hear very well, they need a stronger form of protection; or a louder one in this case."

"Brilliant, Leif!" Hiccup exclaimed cheerfully, bringing his hand up to ruffle Leif's already messy hair. "You're picking this up faster than I could have hoped for!"

"Which is lucky, or I'd probably be deaf by now," Leif grinned, casting his eyes wearily over to the Thunderdrum, still lingering nearby. "Or burnt to a crisp if Toothless hadn't stepped in with that Nightmare earlier," he added, recalling an earlier incident with an irritated Monstrous Nightmare by the cove. "What was with that dragon?"

"I don't know, but it wasn't happy that's for sure," Hiccup replied with a shudder; the image of his son being close to barbecued still lingering in his mind. "At least you learnt how to calm him down, though."

"I thought Uncle Snotlout was kidding when he said Nightmares like being pinned to the ground," Leif said, in awe of the move. "But he calmed down quicker than \_Toothless\_ in a bad mood." With narrowed eyes, Toothless glanced over towards the seven year old with a low growl of annoyance. "What?" Leif asked the Night Fury, unfazed. "It's true." A goofy grin formed on his face. "It was pretty cool, actually," he noted, the goofy grin making him a splitting image of his father.

"Ignore him, bud, he's just being annoying," Hiccup reassured the dragon, with a grin of his own. "Maybe next time we'll just leave him on his own, then. What do you think?" he asked the Night Fury, who gave a low grumble of a laugh much to Leif's annoyance.

"Thanks a lot, daddy," Leif said, with a slight pout, but was unable to stop a twitch of the lips as he smiled at his father. Hiccup did not respond to the smile, though, as his eyes became steely and fixed behind his son. Toothless's guttural grumble reverberated around the clearing, and Leif began to turn to see what was behind him causing Hiccup to clamp a strong hand down on his sons' shoulder, stopping him.

"Don't move, Leif," he whispered quickly, not tearing his eyes from their position. "There's a Changewing right behind you."

Freezing in his tracks, Leif's emerald eyes widened in alarm. "Where?" he murmured, moving his eyes ever so slightly in an attempt to catch a glimpse of the camouflaged dragon.

"Hidden in the trees," Hiccup replied softly, keeping his gaze locked on a tree behind the boy. "I think it's been watching us for a while. Just don't do anything to agitate it, and it will mind its own business." He turned to Toothless, who was glaring daggers at the invisible creature. "Mind what you do, bud," he told his friend gently, as he steered Leif away, "it's just being curious."

"Where is it?" Leif asked, as his father allowed him to turn around. With a frown, he squinted his eyes at the tree Toothless was growling at. "I don't see it."

Bending down beside his son, Hiccup cautiously pointed to a spot between the trees, being mindful of the dragon that was resting there. "See that dark spot in between those two trees?" he said, motioning to the two trees in front of them. "You can just see it there. It's rustling the leaves."

Flicking his eyes around the two trees, Leif slowly shook his head in disappointment. "I don't see it," he sighed, as he glanced up at his father. "No wonder they're so hard to find."

"Trust me, buddy, it's better that you \_don'\_t see them," Hiccup assured him gently, as wrapped his arm around the Viking boy's shoulders. "If they're hidden for this long, it usually means they're just curious with us and don't really want to hurt us. Of course, that isn't making Toothless feel any better," he added with a chuckle, seeing Toothless crouch down protectively. "He classes any dragon he doesn't know as a threat. Come on, bud, leave it be," he said to the dragon as he began to turn away, "he's not doing any harm."



With a final growl towards the rustling leaves that was the Changewing; Toothless turned his back on it and began to make his way back over to his friend, only for Leif to trip on a rock as he turned away from the elusive reptile.

The sudden motion spooked the changeling, its colour violently rippling from mottled greens and browns to vivid purples and reds all the while vicious, steaming acid flowed from the dragons' jowls with every hiss. Hiccup took a step forward to cover Leif as Toothless roared and reared back on his hind legs at the Changewing, his own wings flared open in a defensive posture. Leif could only hear the rushing of blood in his ears and his heart ricocheting off the inside of his chest as he lay on the forest clearing, whilst above him, he could hear Toothless growling at the dragon into submission using all the power his alpha status could give him.

"Come on, bud, you've got it now, let's go!" Leif heard his father yell, as he felt his father's hand gently clasp his own, and as quick as a flash, he was sitting atop Toothless's saddle, heading towards the open air, where the Changewing quickly stopped the chase and melted back into the trees.

"Well, that's one way to lure a Changewing into the open," Hiccup chuckled, as he glanced back to Leif, who gave his father a sad smile.

"Sorry, daddy," Leif said quietly, lowering his eyes, "I didn't mean to scare it like that. I didn't see the rock."

"Hey," Hiccup said softly, causing Leif to return his father's gaze. "It's not your fault. Anyone could have made that mistake. Heck, your \_mother and I \_have made that mistake," Hiccup added with a wide grin, which Leif couldn't help, but return. "Changewings are volatile dragons. There's no telling what they'll do. Even your Uncle Fishlegs doesn't like them too much."

Leif chuckled. "I know," he groaned. "He never stops telling us."

"Never stops telling us either, don't you worry," Hiccup mumbled, before he threw his little boy another smile. "But seeing as you've seen one up close yourself now, why do you think it didn't chase us up here in the open sky? I mean, it had opportunity, didn't it?"

Leif snorted a laugh behind his hand. Leave to his dad to ask him a question after they were almost attacked by a dragon.

"Because there's nothing to blend in with up here?" Leif guessed.

Hiccup nodded. "Exactly," he smiled. "When in doubt, take to the skies. And what should you do if one is following you?"

"Make no sudden movements and keep your eyes away from it," Leif answered without hesitation. "And avoid the acid if you can," he added dryly, before he sighed. "Or in my case, try not to trip."

"Don't worry it, buddy," Hiccup said kindly. "It was just a mistake. Now," he said, with a quick glance down towards the ground, "what would you say to one more dragon before we go home?"

Leif's eyes lit up once more. "Really?" he asked cheerfully. "You're not worried about me scaring another dragon?"

"Not when it's a good old Gronkle," Hiccup said, as he motioned for Toothless to land, pointing out a bright blue Gronkle in the process. "Besides, it was a Gronkle that caused this whole trip anyway," Hiccup continued with a shrug, as he helped the seven year old off Toothless's back. "Might as well give you the information you need."

"Thanks, daddy," Leif said contentedly, as he gave his dad a quick squeeze around his waist, before he crouched down beside Toothless, whose protective stance was lowered upon seeing the species of dragon.

"You don't have to hide there, Leif," Hiccup smiled, motioning for the boy to get up. "Gronkles are gentle by nature, so I'll give you some hands on experience this time."

"Are you sure?" Leif asked, hesitating slightly as he eyed off the bulking dragon. "The one before didn't seem to like me too much. I don't want this one to hate me too."

"It won't, buddy, I promise," Hiccup assured his son gently. "The one you were with was an old one. This one on the other hand-" he nodded to the Gronkle nearby, "-is quite young, and \_a lot\_ more trusting. I'll be right with you," Hiccup added, holding out a gentle hand for seven year old. "One mad Gronkle doesn't account for all of them. You get along with Meatlug don't you?"

"And many of the others on Berk," Leif said, as he broke into a wide smile. He glanced over at the Gronkle, just as it noticed its company, and instead of growling at them, like the seven year old expected, it began to move towards them in curiosity, only hesitating upon noticing Toothless, who made no move to warn it off.

"Well, if Toothless isn't worried, neither am I. "Remaining by his dad's side, Leif shrugged, before he and Hiccup cautiously made their way over to the inquisitive dragon, who eyed them warily, but no move to escape. As they approached closer, though, Leif began to stretch out his hand, with his head turned away. A low warning growl began to emit from its throat.

"Don't look away from it, Leif!" Hiccup exclaimed quickly, his heart thumping loudly in his chest at the growls being emitted from the dragon. "Gronkles prefer eye contact when you go to touch them!"

Leif steadied his outstretched hand against his side, wrenched into a fist, and turned to face the Gronkle. The grumbles coming from the belly of the dragon quietened, but did not stop, with Leif hesitating for a second while he listened to the dragon. A gulp and a step towards the dragon, his eyes locked in the forest green of the dragons', his hand came to rest on the hand came to rest on the stony, knobbly skin between the dragons' nostrils, all the while with Hiccup and Toothless looking on, with similar looks of wary on their

faces. This care was unwarranted as the Gronkle stopped grumbling and a great sticky tongue rolled out the side of its mouth, panting like a dog as Leif gave the Gronkle a head scratch causing Leif to howl with laughter.

"He's just like Meatlug!" Leif chuckled, as he tried to avoid the dragon's tongue.

"Most of them are," Hiccup grinned, as he stepped forward to scratch the dragon. "They're really quite gentle when you know what to do with them." He glanced over to his son. "I'm guessing you looked away when you tried to help with that Gronkle earlier?"

Scratching at the dragon's neck, Leif nodded mutely. "I always thought you looked away when going near a dragon for the first time," he admitted quietly.

"Well, that usually is the case," Hiccup said kindly, "but there are some dragons who don't respond to that move. These guys are one." He nodded to the affectionate Gronkle beside them, now trying to play with Toothless, who was less than impressed. Seeing this, Hiccup chuckled, before he looked back towards the young boy. "I guess we should start explaining that to you guys a little younger. How else would you have been expected to know?"

Leif smiled. "So, it wasn't my fault?" he asked his father, who shook his head with a kind smile.

"It wasn't anyone's fault, buddy," Hiccup assured him gently, bending down to look at his son's relieved face. "You were just trying to help and it didn't work out. No one should have gotten mad for that."

"Can we keep doing this, though?" Leif asked hopefully, as the Gronkle nudged him for more attention, which Leif immediately gave him. "It's really fun!"

"I don't see why not," Hiccup said. "I might even bring Ingrid out here once in a while," he added thoughtfully.

Leif's eyes lit up. "Really?" he asked his father gleefully as he flung his arms around his father's neck. "You're the best, dad!"

"Yeah, that's me," Hiccup grinned, as he wrapped his arms around his son's small frame, "best dad in the world. Tell me something I don't know."

"Don't get a big head, daddy," Leif chuckled, as he let go of the older Viking.

"Too late," Hiccup replied dryly. "According to your mother, I've had one for years."

"You're weird, dad," Leif said with a snigger, causing Hiccup to shrug slightly; a wide grin forming on his lips.

"Been told that for years, too." Glancing around, Hiccup looked over towards the break in the trees where the sun was just beginning to sink near the horizon. With a slight pang of disappointment, he

turned back towards his young son, still happily rubbing the Gronkle's belly.

"We better get going, Leif," Hiccup said, with another glance towards the darkening sky. "If we don't get back soon, your mother will send out a search party. Before we go, though," he added quickly, as Leif half-heartedly stood up from the ground, "what's one thing you do when gaining a Gronkles' trust?"

"Make eye contact," Leif replied without pause. "Go to it slowly, and talk to it calmly so they know you're a friend. Then give it \_a lot\_ of attention," he added when the Gronkle in question nudged him for one last rub.

"You know what, buddy?" Hiccup asked, as he gave Leif a leg up onto Toothless's satchel.

"What?"

"I think you know more than those jerks put together."

\* \* \*

><p>"Where have you been?" Kelda asked her friend, perplexed, when Toothless, Hiccup and Leif landed in front of her. "I haven't been able to find you all day!"<p>

"Daddy took me on a dragon search," Leif replied cheerfully, as he slid off Toothless's back, wobbled, then stood up. "He taught me some things about dragons I didn't know."

"Because of those boys earlier?" Fishlegs asked Hiccup gently, who gave his friend a nod.

"Well, it's better than being picked on, anyway," Hiccup said with a glance towards his son and Kelda, talking animatedly together. "And Leif loved it. He retains information more than any other kid I know."

"Kelda does too," Fishlegs said with a smile. "Anything dragon related and she can repeat it to you. Ludavik does it as well."

"Yeah, my own kids make me feel stupid," Ruffnut said with a slight frown. "I mean, where do they even retain all this info?!" she exclaimed, throwing up her hands as she walked away, causing Hiccup and Fishlegs to chuckle behind her, before Fishlegs looked over towards his daughter, engrossed in the information her best friend was relaying to her.

"I think you might have started something," Fishlegs laughed, seeing his daughter's excitement. "She'll be begging me to take her along for a dragon hunt now."

"I think she's getting enough from Leif," Hiccup said with a grin. "Come on, Leif, we better get home!" he called out to his son, who looked over at his dad with a slight frown.

"Hey, daddy, can I stay at Kelda's tonight?" he asked his dad hopefully. "I want to tell her what happened with the

Changewing."

At the mention of the Changewing, Fishlegs face paled. "You took Leif to see a Changewing?" he asked Hiccup in horror.

"More like it found us," Hiccup replied quickly, cutting off Fishlegs' upcoming rant. "And it went fine in the end, so don't worry."

"Can I stay over tonight, Uncle Fishlegs?" Leif asked the husky Viking, who shook his head to clear his thoughts, before throwing a smile in the boy's direction.

"I don't mind as long as Ruff and Hiccup don't mind," he said, before calling out to his wife. "Ruff, is it alright to have Leif tonight?!"

"He's fine!" Ruff called back, as she and her own son made their way towards their house.

"It's fine with me, too," Hiccup said with a glance at Leif. "Come on, buddy, let's go ask mum and collect your bag." He looked over at Fishlegs. "I'll drop him off in a few minutes."

"I'll wait here for him, don't worry," Fishlegs said.

"I'll be back!" Leif said to Kelda.

"Come on, Leif," Hiccup said quickly, as Leif rushed after his father. "Let's get back before mum has a panic attack."

\* \* \*

><p>Astrid glanced out the window at the darkening sky for that felt like the hundredth time. It was well past sunset and with no sign of her husband and son, Astrid's stomach began to clench with concern. <em>Where in Thor's name could they be?</em> She thought, as she began to pace the living room. She glanced back to the window just as the door swung open, causing Astrid to jump slightly.

"Where in Thor's name have you two been?" she exclaimed in relief, as Hiccup and Leif strolled through the door; Toothless following close behind them. "I was about to send out a search party!"

"Told you we were late, buddy," Hiccup said with a small grin, as he walked over to his wife, giving her a peck on the cheek. "Sorry, milady, we got held up."

"I was being smooched by a Gronkle," Leif chuckled. "And almost attacked by a Changewing," he added with a grin.

"I don't want to know," Astrid said, her face paling slightly at the thought.

"It's a long story," Hiccup said, as he looked around the face. He frowned. "Where's Siri?" he asked. "I thought she was meant to be home?"

"Nope," Astrid replied. "She's staying over at Lennart's tonight instead."

"Huh," Hiccup said with a wide grin. "That makes all three of them then." He nodded to Leif. "This one's staying at Kelda's tonight."

"House to ourselves, huh?" Astrid said, with a playful wink towards Hiccup, who blushed upon seeing it. "That's a first."

"So, it's ok?" Leif asked her cheerfully.

"Fine with me, sweetie," Astrid smiled. "I'll see you tomorrow."

"Yes!" Leif exclaimed as he quickly ran upstairs, grabbed his satchel, before racing back down. "See you later, mummy!" he called back quickly, as he raced out the door.

"Yeah, I'll see you later, too," Astrid laughed as the door slammed shut behind him, before she turned her attention to Hiccup. "Well, he seems better," she said, her tone pleased. "Did he tell you what it was all about?"

"That and more," Hiccup replied with a nod. "Apparently he saw the guys were having problems and tried to help."

Astrid raised her brows in disbelief. "And they had a go at him for \_that\_?"

Hiccup shook his head. "It wasn't just that," he said, pulling her over to the couch to talk more comfortably. "Leif made a few mistakes in trying to calm the Gronkle down, and\_ that's\_ what annoyed the boys. They told him he was stupid, and...well, things escalated from there."

Over the next several minutes, Hiccup relayed the events that had occurred that afternoon, including what Leif had told him about being too stupid to retain anything about dragons. A couple of times Astrid went to interject angrily, but was quickly cut off by Hiccup when he told her about the dragons they observed and the information Leif repeated back after each encounter, including the incident with the Changewing, which made Astrid's azure eyes widen in horror for a moment, before a proud smile began to twitch at her lips upon hearing Leif's understanding of the dragons ability to camouflage.

"There's one thing I still don't get, though," Astrid said with a frown, as Hiccup ended his account of the afternoon. "Why was Leif so determined to help those boys anyway? I mean, he's only seven. It's not like he needs to know everything there is to know about dragons \_yet.\_"

"I think he just wanted to be helpful," Hiccup replied gently, reaching up to twirl a strand of Astrid's blonde curls around his finger. "He sees us, and even Kelda, giving advice about dragons all the time, I think he just wanted to impress them with what he knew."

"Sounds like somebody I know," Astrid grinned, as she wrapped an arm around his shoulders, before playing with a strand of hair at the base of Hiccup's neck.

Hiccup frowned. "How so?"

"Well, who used to try and impress us when we were kids?" Astrid grinned. "I wasn't the one who constantly tried to kill a dragon to impress others...oops, sorry Toothless," she added sheepishly, as Toothless looked up in alarm at the word 'kill'. Hearing the Viking woman's apology, though, Toothless gave a snort of annoyance, before returning to his slumber.

Hiccup chuckled quietly. "Yeah," he said with a small smile. "Like father, like son, huh? At least Leif doesn't have to do this to try to fit in, though," he added quietly, causing Astrid's face to fall. Looking into Hiccup's downcast eyes, a long-uneasy feeling gnawed at her stomach; she had never apologised for how she acted before Toothless, before they tamed dragons, despite it occurring over 20 years before.

"Hiccup..." Astrid said slowly, causing Hiccup to glance up at her. "...I'm so sorry..."

"Astrid," Hiccup chuckled, as he squeezed Astrid's hand encased in his own, "you don't have to apologise. It's been what? 20 years?"

"Yeah, but..."

"But nothing," Hiccup said, as a grin spread across his lips, lighting his emerald eyes up. "I forgave you long ago, sweetheart. Do you think we'd be here," he gestured to the area around them, "if I hadn't?"

Astrid snorted. "Well...no," she admitted, "but you looked..."

"I was just thinking about it, that's all. It doesn't mean I was dwelling on it." He shook his head in astonishment. "Do you seriously think we'd have this life now if I hadn't forgiven you?" Hiccup asked her in amusement. "Because if so, we've done a pretty good job getting around it! I mean," Hiccup grinned mischievously towards her, "we do have three children."

"We do," Astrid agreed with a wide grin. "And those same three children also happen to not..."

"...be here," Hiccup finished for her as they stared around the empty, quiet house for a few moments, before looking at each other. "When's the last time all three kids were away for the night?" Hiccup asked his wife, who gave a shrug as a mischievous grin formed on her lips.

"I don't know," Astrid murmured as she began to edge forward. "But if I were you, I'd take advantage of it while we can."

"And how do you care to do that, milady?" Hiccup asked her quietly, as Astrid's ran a hand up his arm, causing him to lose his train of thought.

"How about finishing what we started?" she breathed, as she brought a gentle hand up to his neck, before playfully twirling her fingers around the two tiny braids within his hair.

"Whatever the lady wants," Hiccup murmured, as Astrid began to move closer and closer, before finally, she seized his mouth with hers, making him squeak in surprise at the sudden movement, but making no move to complain as his brain turned to mush. Astrid's hands roughly pulled at his vest, bringing him closer to her, before they ran up the length of his arms, neck and up his hairline, sending shivers through his whole body.

Seeing where this leading, Toothless threw his rider and Astrid a look of disgust, before he quickly made his escape up the stairs and into Siri's room, where the door shut behind him with a loud \_creak.\_

"I think we just scared Toothless off," Hiccup murmured as Astrid pressed a feather light kiss upon the sensitive skin on his neck.

Astrid laughed lightly. "It wouldn't be the first time," she whispered, before she moved her mouth back on his once more, causing Hiccup to once again lose his train of thought, as Astrid pushed him roughly onto the hard surface of the couch, causing Hiccup to wince in pain.

"You okay?" she mumbled, as Hiccup moved his position.

"I'm fine," he answered, without hesitation, as his fingers found their way into her blonde locks, effortlessly untying her tight braid where a wave of golden locks fell down her shoulders. Burying his fingers into her pale hair, he seized her delicate mouth with his once more; his mouth moving fast and hot against his own, before he slowly made his way down her neck, making her shiver in the pleasure of it. Without breaking the kiss her lips were so contentedly caught up in, Astrid brought her hands slowly down Hiccup's back, before gently tugging at his vest, which after a few failed attempts, was eventually removed, to Hiccup's amusement, before she wrapped a leg around his hip and pulled herself on top of him.

"You know..." Hiccup breathed, breaking the kiss long enough to speak, "...this would be so much easier in our own room...then down here."

Astrid sighed, but made no move to get up from her position. "I know..." she mumbled, as Hiccup's fingers gently grabbed hold of the edge of her shirt, before carefully removing it, placing a kiss on her shoulder as he pulled it over her head, flailing slightly as he almost went off the edge of the small wooden couch.

"Maybe...we should take this somewhere else?" Hiccup suggested, giving his wife the most seductive expression he could make, resulting in a \_very\_ un-Astrid like giggle to come from the woman's lips.

"Lead the way," she giggled, as Hiccup carefully stood up, before yanking Astrid to her feet. Laughing, Astrid pressed her lips once more to Hiccup's, before suddenly dragging him up the narrow stairs, banging painfully into a banister on the way up. Upon reaching the bedroom, Astrid led an amused Hiccup into the room, before kicking the door shut on the night behind her.

\* \* \*



><p>It wasn't until sometime later that Hiccup's brain finally recalled the events from earlier in the day, and upon remembering, he frowned suddenly.<p>

"Hey, Astrid?"

"Hmm?" she responded drowsily, as she lay on Hiccup's bare chest. "What's up?"

"What did you do with the boys that teased Leif earlier?"

Without opening her eyes, Astrid's mouth twitched in a tiny grin. "Oh, I wouldn't worry about them for a while, babe."

Hiccup raised his eyebrows. "Why?" he asked nervously. "What did you do with them?"

Astrid sniggered. "Let's just say that they won't want to bother Leif again for a while, and be done with it, shall we?"

Opening his mouth to reply, Hiccup quickly shut it, before shaking his head.

"You know what? I'm not even going to ask."

"Can I ask you a question now?"

"Um...I guess so?" Hiccup asked, perplexed, as Astrid opened her eyes to meet his.

"Where did Leif learn that kind of language?"

"Oh, that...well, yeah..." Hiccup chuckled, before reaching up to rub his neck awkwardly. "Let's just save that for another day, shall we, milady?"

Astrid sighed. "I don't even want to ask."

\* \* \*

><p><em>I was going to add in what Astrid did to those guys, but then I decided, hey, why don't I leave it to everyone's else's imaginations? :p <em>

\_Anyway, Leif finally got his chance to shine in this chapter, and as you can see, and yes, he does have a bit of a temper, among other things. It won't be the last time you hear this boy throw out a phrase like 'Dreki's bacraut' lol (which is Nordic language). He won't become a potty mouth, he's just got a short temper is all. It was also nice to write a moment between Hiccup and Astrid this chapter, especially with Astrid realising she's never apologised to Hiccup for what happened before the defeat of the Red Death which wasn't even in the original plan and was included quite late, but it worked, so I kept it. \_

\_Ok, so next chapter will take place about six months after this chapter and is a family story, sort of. I worked through everyone's suggestions last chapter, and have used a mix of a few ideas, as well as my own, so thanks to everyone who gave out suggestions :)

\_\_\*\*When the Haddock kids are grounded for using Hiccup's old test flight suit, Siri is forced to take care of her younger siblings when her parents are away from Berk for the night\*\*\_\_\*\*with Siri and Leif blaming each other for their predicament. When Ingrid comes down with a fever, though, the siblings all have to work together until Hiccup and Astrid return home. \*\*\_\_This idea has been fairly developed and to be honest, I'm looking forward to it as all three kids will be featured heavily.\_

\_Alright, I'll be honest. I'm not sure when my next chapter will be up. I am no longer going to guarantee a time frame as I simply cannot stick with it anymore. It could be 3 weeks, it could 6 again, there's no telling. With me on holidays at present, I might get some of it written before school starts again, but there are no guarantees. Rest assured though, that I will NEVER abandon this story, it will simply just take longer between updates. I cannot simply come home and drop everything to write, then update quickly. It isn't that easy. These chapters take time to write and they are not as easy to write as you might think! \_\_\*\*For this reason, I would kindly ask my readers to please refrain from begging for updates, although I am honoured you ask. I am working as best and as fast as I can to get them to you and if I am late, there is a reason. Being a casual teacher is hard, yet rewarding and it takes up most of my time during the week and begging for updates puts a lot of pressure on me is all. I have to take the work while I can before the end of the school year. Thank you so much to everyone for being so patient for me. I'm extremely grateful. \*\*\_

\_Ok, before you go, \*\*PLEASE, PLEASE,\*\* \_\_\*\*DON'T FORGET TO REVIEW! It's all I kindly ask for! :) \*\*\_\_Just remember, though, that\_\_\*\* NO FLAMES WILL BE TOLERATED, \*\*\_\_but\_\_\*\* KIND constructive criticism is accepted. \*\*\_

\_Thanks for reading! :D I'll update as soon as I can!\_

#### 40. Chapter 40: Grounded

\_Hey guys, I am so sorry that it's been six weeks again, but I've been really busy! And I've been sick lately too, as has my boyfriend, or this may have been up a week or so ago. Due to the height of winter I've been called in to work A LOT and then I managed to catch the same thing the teachers I was replacing had in the first place. Either way, I'm sorry for the wait!\_

\_Anyway, here's my next chapter! And it's really long, so I'm sorry if it takes a little bit to read it. I think I may have rambled on a little too much this chapter, and I admit it. A few things repeat themselves too, but after casual teaching so much this year, I can tell you Siri and Leif repeating the same things in their fights this chapter is actually quite accurate when it comes to kids. Annoyingly enough.\_

\_So this chapter is a mix of a few reviewers' ideas, as well as an idea given to me from the episode with Gustav in Race to the edge where Hiccup got really mad at him. You'll get to see more of the kids' personalities this chapter as it's mostly about them. This takes about 6 months after the last chapter and Siri is \_\_\*\*14, \*\*\_\_Leif is\_\_\*\* 8, \*\*\_\_and Ingrid is \_\_\*\*4 and a half. \*\*\_

\_Enjoy the chapter!\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 40 â€" Grounded<span>

\* \* \*

><p>"Do you really think we should be doing this?"<p>

"Oh, come on, stop being such a baby."

"I am NOT a baby!"

"Really? Because you're certainly acting like one then."

"Oh yeah," Leif scoffed, looking up at his sister with narrowed eyes. "Why don't you try it then?"

"What? You think I'm stupid enough to try this infernal contraption out?" Siri asked her younger sibling, eyeing off the bright red mechanism clutched tightly in his hands. "You're the one who said it looked like fun, not me!"

"I didn't mean I wanted to try it, though!" Leif exclaimed, glancing down at the object in his hands sceptically. "Although," he added with a crease of his brows, "it does look pretty cool." He looked up at his sister, a tentative expression crossing his face. "Do you think it works?"

Siri shrugged, unconcerned. "How should I know?" she replied. "If dad's kept it, though, it's safe to say it probably does. Maybe," she added nervously, as Leif struggled to keep it open. Hearing his sister's remark, though, the eight year old glanced up at her in annoyance.

"Gee, thanks for confidence, sis," he grumbled, returning his attention to the task at hand.

"What are you doing?" a little voice suddenly came from behind them.

The two siblings suddenly started, and wheeled their heads around to the source of the noise, only to see the youngest Haddock child standing there, with the most curious expression crossing her pretty young face. Glancing over to the contraption Leif was holding firmly in his hands, her brows rose slightly.

"What that?" she asked, pointing to the object. "It looks like Toofas's wings."

"Close, Ingrid," Siri smiled, holding out a hand for the little girl to take. "It's daddy's old flight suit."

Ingrid frowned, as she glanced at the crimson apparatus, slightly worn from age, before glancing up at her older brother, who was still struggling with one of the wings, which wasn't folding out the whole way.

"That doesn't look like daddy's flight suit," the little girl pointed

out, as she felt the fabric, before looking it up and down. "It looks funny!" she giggled, as Leif finally managed to wrench the wing free, before falling flat on his face in the dirt in the process, causing Ingrid's giggles to grow louder.

"That's it, I'm not using this thing," Leif said, as he threw the mechanism to the ground in frustration. "This thing is dangerous. For me," he added, with a hand to his nose, which was pulsating painfully, after its meeting with the hard ground.

"Walking on flat ground is dangerous for you," Siri drawled, as she bit back a laugh. "Too bad, though, I thought you would have jumped on the chance to have a go on it."

"I do want too," Leif replied, eyeing the flying contraption off longingly. "I mean, have you seen daddy using his flight suit. It's so cool."

"Then what are you waiting for then?" Siri said, bending down to pick up the crimson apparatus, before holding it out before him. "It can't be too dangerous if dad's still in one piece..."

"Um...actually..."

"You know what I mean," Siri said, with a faint flush rising on her cheeks. "Other than his leg, he hasn't gotten any injuries from this thing, does he?"

"How do you know?" Leif asked her, as his eyes locked onto the contraption in her hand. "It's not like dad tells us everything."

"Oh, stop being such a wimp," Siri said, with a roll of her eyes. "You're the one who got it out! Just fly out to one of the statues, and then come back. Couldn't be simpler!"

"If it's so simple, why don't you do it?" Leif retorted nervously, as he glanced over the cliff edge, before springing back just as quickly. "That is one big drop," he mumbled nervously, holding back an arm as Ingrid took a curious step forward.

"Oh for...I'll do it then!" Siri exclaimed in annoyance, as she quickly strapped the winged contraption to her back, before adjusting the straps. Once it was in place, she took a hesitant step forward, peered over the cliff edge, before glancing back to her brother with a wink, who glanced back at her with wide eyes.

"What are you going to do?" he asked his sister nervously, whilst holding his younger sister's hand tightly so she didn't wonder off.

"I'm going to fly out to one of those statues, go around it, and then come back. Then," she added with a grin towards her sibling, "I'll show you just how much of a chicken you are!"

"Siri, you don't know if that thing even...works," he finished lamely, as Siri took a step forward, before disappearing before his eyes. "Siri!" he yelled desperately.

A few tense moments passed, and just as Leif's heart began to rapidly speed up, Siri suddenly rose back into the air in a whirl of colour; slightly off balance, but flying all the same. Leif's mouth dropped open.

"Leifey!" Ingrid suddenly shouted from beside him, her bright green eyes widening in awe. "Siri is flying like daddy!"

"I can see that," Leif said dumbly, as he watched his older sister quickly approach Berk's statue out to sea. "Wow. That thing actually does work. That is so cool!" Cupping his hands over his mouth, Leif yelled in the teenager's direction. "Go Siri!"

"Go Siri!" Ingrid echoed brightly, as she clung onto her brother's hand.

Leif and Ingrid watched their sister whirl and soar on eddies far above the oceans' surface as she slowly but surely made her way towards the closest statue. The further away from the coast of Berk Siri flew, however, the less in-control she seemed to Leif; she seemed to be wobbling and getting caught in eddies more and more. As she closed onto the statue, a sharp gust of wind seemingly caught her tail end and unceremoniously dumped her onto a patch of grass none the worse for wear save her ego, and Leif sighed in relief.

"See?" Leif said, as he held out a kind hand for his windswept sister. "I said that thing was dangerous. That thing totally dumped you!" he chuckled.

"Hey, considering how old this thing is, I think it did a pretty good job," Siri said, as she swatted his helpful hand away in slight irritation. "Obviously the design just doesn't allow for sharp turns. So..." Grunting, Siri pushed herself off the ground, stooping to pick up the flying contraption in the process, before turning to her brother with a grin. "...are you going to have a go now, or am I going to have call you a chicken for the rest of your life?"

"Are you kidding?!" Leif exclaimed, his bright green eyes widening in horror. "I'm not using this thing! You just got dumped!"

"Oh, come on, I just showed you it's safe!" Siri exclaimed, as she held out the apparatus towards him. "You just can't rely on sharp turns, that's all!"

"Oh, yeah, I feel\_ really\_ safe."

"I'm not expecting you to fly to dragon's edge and back!" Siri said loudly, as she gestured roughly towards the stone statues. "It's not even that far! You really think I'd let you go out if I thought it was dangerous, Leif?"

"But it's not dangerous for you! You're older!" Leif replied worriedly.

"Coming from the person who usually likes to try new things," Siri answered. "Who would have thought a bit of free flying would cause you to chicken out?"

"I am NOT a chicken!" Leif yelled, his face reddening in anger. "I just don't want to crash into something, that's all!"

"It's like that's stopped you before," Siri pointed out with a cheeky grin. "Come on, Leif, just have a go! Doing something dangerous is what being a Viking all is about!"

Leif frowned in irritation. "That's not fair, Seer."

"Have a go, Leifey!" Ingrid suddenly piped up brightly. "I wanna see you fly like daddy, too!"

"Thanks a lot, Ingrid," Leif mumbled, as he looked down at his little sister's eager expression.

"He can't do it, Ingrid," Siri said with a smug grin. "We've found the one thing Leif is too scared to do."

"I. AM. NOT. SCARED!"

"Then prove it," Siri said, as she handed him the flying mechanism. "I dare you to fly out to one of the statues like I did, and then come back. That's all you have to do."

"Have a go, Leifey!" Ingrid begged the eight year old, who looked down at her with a sigh, before snatching the device from his older sisters hand, before putting it on, then turning back to glare at the teenager.

"I'm so going to get you back for this, sis."

"No, you won't," Siri grinned, as Leif nervously stepped onto the edge of the cliff. "You'll have so much fun you'll forget to be mad." Taking a hold of her little sister's hand, she and the four year old quickly took a step back. "Good luck!"

The eight year old sighed. "Whatever." Quickly fixing up one of the wings, Leif took a nervous step forward, took a deep breath, closed his eyes, and without further ado; stepped one foot off the cliff.

"Where he go?!" Ingrid exclaimed nervously as the boy vanished from sight, making for one slightly tense moment, before he quickly shot back up into sight, his eyes shooting open as he felt the wind whipping up all around him.

"Holy Thor, this thing\_ does\_ work!" Leif exclaimed exuberantly as the wind caught the open wings of the suit sending the thrilled eight year old higher into the sky. "This is so awesome! Woo!" he yelled, as he threw his hands up into the air, only for him to drop slightly. "Oh crap," he said nervously, before holding his arms out once more.

"Don't move around too much!" Siri yelled after him, cupping her hands around her mouth. "You're relying on the wind to move it, not you!"

"NOW YOU TELL ME?!" Leif exclaimed back apprehensively, as he rapidly approached the stone monument.

"YOU'RE DOING FINE!" Siri yelled cheerfully. "JUST USE THE STATUE TO HELP YOU TURN!"

"EASIER SAID THAN DONE, SEER!"

"Siri, Leifey's gonna crash," Ingrid said timidly, as she watched her brother's flailing movements. "He need help."

Biting her lip uneasily, Siri watched as her brother quickly approached the bulking statue, flailing nervously. Before Siri could lend any assistance, though, a gust of wind blew up around the young boy, catching him unawares which wrenched the young boy towards another statue. Beginning to panic, Leif began to flail himself and the flying contraption in an attempt to steer away from the monument; that only made things worse, and within moments, Leif was uncontrollably heading towards ground, the flight suit no longer at his command.

"SIRI, I CAN'T CONTROL THIS THING!" Leif screamed, his voice awash with panic as his began to lose height. "DO SOMETHING!"

"Siri, he's gonna crash!" Ingrid screamed fearfully as she tugged on her sister's arm, which was tense with fear. "You gotta get daddy!"

"But..." Siri stuttered, "...we're not supposed..."

"SIRI!" Leif screamed, one wing of the flying contraption suddenly clipped the stone, sending him towards the water at an odd angle.

"Siri, you gotta get daddy!" Ingrid exclaimed urgently. "He's gonna crash!" Before Siri could do anything, though, the four year old suddenly let go of the older girl's hand, before making her way down the hill as fast as her tiny legs could carry her

"Ingrid!" Siri screamed, as she went to chase after her, but hearing her brother's panicked screams from behind her, she stopped and doubled back as panic began to envelop her body. "Oh shit!" she exclaimed, as her arms flew up to her head in terror. "HANG ON LEIF!"

"WHAT DO YOU THINK I'M DOING?!" she heard him yell back. "JUST GET ME OUT OF HERE!"

"WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?!" Siri screamed, her eyes wildly gazing around the vacant area. "IT'S NOT LIKE I HAVE MY OWN SET OF WINGS!"

"WHAT'S NIGHT STAR THEN? A FLIGHTLESS BIRD?!" Leif bellowed, as he managed to regain some height, but even now, he was still teetering dangerously close to the large sculpture, which loomed over the boy like a storm cloud.

"I...I DON'T..." Siri stuttered in a panic, but she was quickly cut off by the sound of hurrying footsteps behind her, and before she could turn around, the sound of her father's anxious voice pierced the air.

"LEIF!" He threw a stunned look towards his daughter. "How in Thor's name did this happen?!" he exclaimed, but before Siri could reply, Hiccup held up a hand to stop her. "Forget it, I'll find out

later!"

Racing over to Toothless, Hiccup literally threw himself onto the saddle, and took off, just as a large gust of wind suddenly took hold of the flight suits already unstable wings, sending the petrified eight year old plummeting towards the unforgiving water below.

"DADDDDDDY!"

"Oh, I'm such an idiot!" Siri exclaimed; her eyes locked on the terrifying scene in front of her. "Why did I dare him to do this?"

"YOU DID \_WHAT\_?!"

Having forgotten her mother was still behind her, Siri tensed as her mother's irate voice pierced her ear drums. Chuckling nervously, the teenager quickly turned to face her mother.

"Well...you see, we..."

"Save it, Siri." Siri winced at the disappointment edged in her tone. "You can explain \_after\_ your brother is back on solid ground..."

"Daddy got Leifey, mummy!" Pointing out towards the twin statues, Ingrid began to hop and down in excitement. "Look, they coming back."

As the female side of the family watched on, Toothless had drawn level with the floundering flight suit and flyer. Hiccup reached out and grabbed Leif by the back of his pants, pulling the wings out of the way and up onto Toothless's back. With the boy secure - as secure as he could be, anyway - Hiccup and Toothless turned and returned safely to the Berk cliff line, Leif gripping his father around the waist as tightly as his arms could manage.

"Oh, thank gods," Astrid said, a little shakily, as they landed in front of them. "Are you alright, Leif?"

Leif slid off Toothless's saddle, landing on a heap on the grass with a loud groan. "I \_never\_ want to have a flight suit on my own." He took the hand his mother was holding out to him, pulling himself up with a slight grunt as his mother enveloped him into her arms. "If I ever see that thing again," he said with a glance at the flight suit clutched in his father's hand, "it'll be too soon; because I \_never\_ want to see that thing again for as long as I live!"

"And you aren't going to if I have anything to say about it," Hiccup said, as he threw the old suit onto the ground. Eyes narrowing, Hiccup quickly glanced over towards his son. "What were you even thinking trying to use this old thing?" he exclaimed crossly. "You could have been killed!"

"Well...you see-"

"I wouldn't put the blame entirely on Leif, Hiccup," Astrid spoke up, cutting off Hiccup's next comment. "It seems to me that a certain daughter of ours \_convinced\_ him to do it." She glanced over at the



fourteen year old with narrowed eyes. "Isn't that you said, Siri?"

Eyes wide in astonishment, Hiccup glanced over to his eldest daughter, who was shuffling nervously from one foot to the other.

"Is this true, Siri?" Hiccup asked her, brows furrowing. "Did you dare your brother to do this?"

"Well...I wouldn't say \_dare\_..."

"You did too!" Leif exclaimed angrily, as he managed to break away from his mother's embrace. "You teased me until I finally agreed to do it! How is that not a dare?!"

"I didn't mean for \_this\_-" Siri gestured irritably to the bent up form of the old flight suit in front of them, "-to happen, though! How was I supposed to know the stupid thing would do that?!"

"I thought you crashing would have given you an idea...!"

"THAT'S ENOUGH!" Astrid bellowed, effectively cutting off the sibling's squabbling, before they looked over at their mother with wide eyes. "Seriously, what were you two thinking?! If Ingrid hadn't come to get us, who knows what could have happened!"

"Ingrid was goading Leif on, too!" Siri exclaimed, as she brandished a hand towards her younger sister, who looked back at her with wide green eyes, as she clung to her mother's hand. "It wasn't just me!"

"Yes, and Ingrid isn't old enough to make her own decisions," Hiccup cut in, crossly. "You know as well as I do that she only follows what other people do, and what you two did was beyond stupid." Shaking his head in disbelief, Hiccup looked over at his two kids with an infuriated glance. "Seriously, of all the stupid, inconsiderate stunts you could have pulled, you chose this! You could have been seriously injured! Or worse!" he added, with a throw of his hands. "Do you even realise how dangerous that could have been? That old flight suit of mine was put away for a reason. Did that even \_once\_ cross your mind...?"

"I told her it was dangerous, daddy, but she didn't listen!" Leif cut in quickly, only for his mouth to snap shut again as his father glanced at him, eyes narrowed.

"If you knew it was so dangerous, you wouldn't have gotten it out in the first place!" Rubbing his face with a hand, Hiccup looked up with a deep sigh. "Honestly, all you two have proven to me today is that you are too irresponsible to be trusted with anything like this. I honestly expected better from the both of you."

"Especially you, Siri," Astrid piped up, her voice tinged with disappointment. "You're fourteen years old, yet \_this\_ is how you behave? How can we start treating you as a responsible teenager if you don't act like one?"

Mouth falling open in disbelief, Siri looked from one parent to the other. "Are you kidding me?" she said, irritation seeping through

every word. "Why am I getting in trouble for this? I didn't even do anything wrong!" She gestured to Leif angrily. "\_He's\_ the one who got out the stupid thing, not me!"

"And who's the one that used it even though I didn't want too?" Leif hit back, his face reddening with anger as he glared towards his sister. "You're the one who..."

"Enough!" Astrid exclaimed angrily, glancing between the two children, who quickly ceased their argument, but continued to glare at one another. "\_Both\_ of you are at fault here, and it is for that reason that we cannot let this slide-"

"But mum, I was only-" Siri started.

"\_No\_ buts, Siri," Hiccup said, before his wife could reply. "As of right now, you \_and\_ your brother are grounded."

"Grounded?!" Siri and Leif's mouths dropped open in disbelief. "For how long?!"

"The next week," Astrid said, looking down at the two kids sternly. "That means no leaving the house, no friends over, no dragon lessons, \_and\_-" She looked over at Siri, who was successfully glaring daggers at her mother, "\_no\_ dragon flying." At these words, though, Siri's annoyance bubbled to the surface.

"I was supposed to meet Gerold in a few hours!" Siri exclaimed frantically. "He wanted to take me to a spot he found on the island a few days ago! We've been planning it!"

"You should have thought about that before you put yourself, \_and\_ your brother in danger," Hiccup said, unfazed by his daughter's pleas, as he picked the old flight suit up. "You'll just have to reschedule with Gerold, won't you?" Seeing his eldest daughter open her mouth to argue, he held up a hand. "And if you continue to argue about it, it'll be another week stuck inside. Is that understood?"

"Now, inside," Astrid said, pointing a finger towards the door. "As of this moment, you are not to step foot outside of this house."

"But what are we supposed to do for a whole week?!" Leif exclaimed in horror, as he marched past his mother to the house, who gave him a wide smile as he past.

"Well, I guess you'll just do some work around the house for me, won't you?" she suggested.

"Great," the eight year old drawled, throwing a heated glare towards his sister as they crossed the threshold. "This is just how I wanted to spend the week."

"Daddy," Ingrid finally piped up, as she and Hiccup entered the house. "Am I gounded, too? It my fault too."

"Only for tonight, sweetie, and that's only because mummy and I won't be here," her father said, as he bent down to pick her up. Hearing this, Siri and Leif froze in their tracks and wheeled around to their

parents.

"What do you mean, you won't be here?" they exclaimed in unison.

"That's what we're about to talk about," Astrid said, as she sat on the couch. "Sit down," she added, patting the space next to her, "and we'll explain about the first part of your punishment."

\* \* \*

><p>"You expect me to look after Leif and Ingrid <em>all night<em>?!" Siri exclaimed incredulously, as her eyes wondered around the room, watching her parents hurried packing. "How is that grounding me?"

"We'll only be away overnight," Astrid replied, with a quick glance in her daughter's direction, before returning to the task at hand. "There's a meeting tonight at Outcast Island, and then we'll head home first thing in the morning. As long as the weather holds out, that is," she added with a flick of her eyes towards the window. "Besides-" she went on, as she continued her whirlwind around the house, "-this will teach you responsibility in a way you've never experienced before, which will certainly help after the incident this afternoon."

"But it wasn't just me!" Siri argued angrily. "\_He\_", she gestured angrily at Leif, "did it too! How come he's not being punished?"

Leif raised his eyebrows at the accusation. "Stuck inside for a week with you isn't being punished?"

"That's enough!" Astrid exclaimed angrily, glancing between the two bickering siblings. "It's one thing to fight between yourselves, but you're upsetting your sister, and that is not on!"

Bewildered, Siri threw a glance to her younger sister, and her stomach clenched slightly at the saddened look on the little girl's face as she cuddled up to her mother. Upon noticing her sister's eyes on her, the four year old looked up at her with wide glistening eyes and a slight flush to her usual pale cheeks.

"Are you gonna be mad at each other all day?" the little girl asked dejectedly, as she glanced back and forth between her two older siblings, who quickly looked at each other uncertainly, before Siri glanced back at her sister with a wide smile.

"No, Ingrid, we're not," Siri reassured her, as she sat beside the young girl, before placing her upon her lap. "Leifey and I are just really annoyed with each other right now-"

"\_Really \_annoyed," Leif mumbled from his spot on the couch.

"-but we're not annoyed at you," Siri went on, pretending she hadn't heard. "You just follow what your naughty brother and sister do," Siri added with a mischievous grin which made the four year old let out a soft giggle.

"Well then," Astrid said, "now that that's settled. Hiccup-" she glanced over at her husband, "-we better get ready to go. I want to

leave now before the weather gets any worse." Looking over towards the window, she frowned nervously as she saw the darkening clouds overhead. "It looks like we're going to get one heck of a snowstorm."

"Great," Hiccup said dryly, stooping down to pick up his satchel. "Just what I wanted; to be blown out of the sky in a snowstorm...oops, sorry, guys," he added hurriedly, as his wife and eldest daughter openly winced. "Didn't think," he continued guiltily, causing Astrid to smile at him, before turning to each of her children and giving them a quick hug.

"If you need any help tonight, just go and see your grandparents," Astrid told them. "Dinner's stewing in the pot, and there's nothing else that needs doing, so you should be all set. And if I hear you two arguing by the time we get home," she glanced pointedly towards her two eldest children, "you can kiss your freedom goodbye for a while, is that understood?"

"Yes, mum," Siri and Leif muttered, while Ingrid just gave her mother a quiet nod, her face slightly flushed as she watched her parents prepare to leave. Glancing down at her sister, Siri's eyebrows knitted together in concern, before recalling that she always looked like this when separated from her parents for any great length of time.

Nodding, Astrid quickly bent down to give her youngest daughter a kiss on the cheek.

"You be good, sweetie, ok?"

Ingrid nodded quietly. "Yes, mummy," she said softly.

"Good girl," Astrid smiled, as she stood up and went over to the door. "Ok, guys, we'll see you all tomorrow. Good luck!" she called back, as she and Hiccup went out the door.

As soon as the door clicked shut, Leif looked back towards his sister with an irritated glare. "Well, now what are we going to do?" he asked her.

Siri scoffed. "How should I know? You're the one who got us into this mess in the first place. If you hadn't got the dumb thing out, I'd be hanging out with Gerold right now."

Leif grinned. "You mean your boyfriend?" Leif drawled mischievously. "Gross."

"He's not my boyfriend!" Siri denied, as a faint flush rose in her pale cheeks. "We're just friends, that's all."

"Sure," Leif drawled. "Then why do you blush when you talk about him, and not with Lennart. Who is a lot cooler by the way," Leif added, sniggering at Siri's irritated expression.

"Yeah, well, at least I'd be out doing something if I could still meet him, but no," Siri said angrily as she threw a heated glare at the eight year old, "you just had to get that stupid flight suit out! Now I'm stuck in here all week, unable to do anything!"

"I'm not the one who used it!"

"Mummy and daddy said no fighting!" Ingrid exclaimed suddenly as her siblings voices got louder and louder. Hearing their sister's voice, though, they quietened and looked down at her flushed face. "You promised not to be mean to each other."

"Yeah, well, mummy and daddy aren't here, Ingrid," Leif said delicately, as he threw Siri another glare over Ingrid's head.

"What Leif means, Ingrid-" Siri said gently, as she bent down to her sister's level, "-is that we only promised mummy and daddy we wouldn't be fighting \_by the time they got home. \_Right now, though..."

"...Right now, we can say what we want," Leif countered, with an angry glance towards his older sister. "And\_ I\_ say stay out of my way for the afternoon..."

"Why?" Ingrid asked, as her bright bottle green eyes glanced between one sibling to another in bewilderment. "I thought we were gonna play?" She looked up at her older sister hopefully, who gave the four year old a sympathetic smile.

"I think...it might be better if we stay our each other's hair for a while, Ingy," Siri began kindly, as she stroked a lock of auburn hair out of the little girl's eyes. "Especially if we're going to be stuck in here with each other all week," she muttered, throwing a pointed glance towards her brother, who quickly returned it.

"Sounds good to me," he said quickly, making his way over to the stairs. "I'll see you later."

"Sounds good to me too!" Siri called back, just as Leif's bedroom door clicked shut on them. Irritated, the teenager shook her head, before bringing her attention back to her younger sister, looking back at her with a deflated expression.

"Can't you still pway?" she asked the older girl.

"I think it might be better if you go and play by yourself too, Ingrid," Siri explained patiently. "Just for the afternoon anyway. Anyway, I think you should have a little sleep," she continued tentatively, noting the little girl's darkened eyes. "You look really tired. How about you go and do that and I'll call you when it's dinnertime, okay?"

"Okay," Ingrid whispered.

"Good girl." Giving her younger sister a swift kiss on the cheek, Siri stood up, before making her way upstairs, Midnight following close behind. As the door swung shut on the youngest Haddock sibling, she glanced down at her dragon doll, a stuffed Stormcutter by the name of Batsy, with a tiny sigh.

" It look like it just you and me's, Batsy."

\* \* \*

><p>The rest of the afternoon passed slowly in an awkward silence. As

the snowfall grew heavier outside the house, so did the tension, as Siri and Leif left the sanctuary of their rooms for the first time that afternoon.<p>

Ingrid picked at the vegetables in her soup. She didn't like them; they were slightly bitter and were still a little hard from not having been cooked long enough. As she picked through the stew, the house was silent as the storm outside, her older siblings almost staring daggers at each other. It didn't look like they were going to be civil with each other anytime soon.

"Are you okay, Ingrid?" Siri suddenly piped up, as she looked over the little girl. "You've been really quiet."

"I'm sleepy," the girl responded quietly, without looking up from her plate. "And I not hungry," she added, as she gently pushed the plate away from herself.

"Ingrid, I know you're upset that Leif and I are fighting, but you have to eat," Siri coaxed her gently, as she pushed the plate of food back towards the young girl. "You can't go to bed on an empty tummy."

"But, I-"

"Leave her alone, Siri," Leif said, as he saw the tired expression in his little sister's eyes. "She doesn't want it." He looked down at his own plate with a revolted expression. "Actually, I don't want it either. It tastes funny."

"Well, sorry that I can't cook as well as dad can," Siri snapped, as she snatched the bowl away from him. "I did my best."

"We wouldn't be here if you didn't get us grounded," Leif mumbled bitterly, as he lay back on his chair with his arms folded. "We'd be with Grandma."

"Yeah, and Grandma can't cook either, Leif," Siri reminded him, as she pushed the plate of stew back towards Ingrid, before she threw another glance over at the eight year old. "And stop blaming me for what happened. I'm not the one who got that thing out in the first place."

"Yeah, to look at it," Leif said, as he swiftly stood up over the table. "I never wanted to actually fly the silly thing! That was you!"

"Shut up!" Siri exclaimed quickly, with a glance down at the little girl beside her, whose emerald eyes with swimming with tears and her face slightly flushed pink. "You're upsetting Ingrid!"

"She wouldn't be upset if you hadn't gotten us in trouble in the first place!" Leif countered, his arms waving as he got into the teenager's face. "If mummy and daddy hadn't put you in charge of us, we'd be with Grandma right now, and she wouldn't be sad!"

"That's enough," Siri said angrily, before she knelt down in front of the girl, who was on the verge of tears. "Go to bed, Ingrid. I'll come check on you later."

"I feel yucky," the little girl said, as Siri tenderly putting an arm around the young girl's shoulders.

"You're just tired and upset, Ingrid. You'll feel better after you get some sleep. I promise." Gently coaxing the girl over the staircase, Siri was taken aback as Ingrid suddenly turned around and looked at her older sister with a dejected expression.

"You and Leifey are mean," she said, before she slowly walked up the staircase, Mossy curiously following her, before she turned the handle of the door and vanished from sight, with a tiny mutter of, "I not wanna talk to you," coming the room as the door closed on the rest of the household.

"That was rude," Leif commented, as he kept his eyes on the closed door of the girl's room.

Narrowing her eyes, Siri whipped her head around to her brother. "Oh, you think?!" she exclaimed heatedly, as she approached the boy, eyes blazing. "Well, maybe if you stop blaming me for everything, she wouldn't have said it!"

"You're yelling too, it's not just me!" Leif responded angrily, straining his neck to look into his sister's face, who responded with a peevish glare of her own.

"Yeah, well, when don't you yell?" she snapped, as she drew herself up to her full height, towering over her brother, who was still rather short for his age. "That's all you've done since the day you were born anyway!"

"What's that supposed to mean?!" Leif demanded irritably, undeterred by his sister's towering height over him. "What's that got to do with...with, \_anything\_?!"

"Try everything!" Siri yelled, throwing her hands up in the air. "You can never go one day without yelling or getting annoyed about \_something\_, \_and it's been the same way ever since you were born! It's little wonder that I ran away!"

Leif's gut tightened like a vice. '\_Like she'd do that\_', he thought to himself, trying to steel his next words, as his temper shied.

"That's...that's a lie!" Leif screamed tearfully, as his vision blurred before his very eyes. "You're lying! You've \_never\_ ran away!"

"Yes, I did!" Siri exclaimed angrily, anger pulsing through her body so much that the teenager was unaware of the hurt growing in the young boy's eyes. "I ran away because you never stopped crying! \_Every day\_ \_you just screamed and screamed," Siri emphasised, brandishing one hand in annoyance as she spoke, "and you just \_never\_ stopped. I ran off because you were so annoying!"

"I AM NOT ANNOYING!" Leif screeched, his voice breaking. "ALL YOU DO IS BLAME ME FOR EVERYTHING! YOU'RE EVEN BLAMING ME FOR SOMETHING I DID AS A \_BABY\_!"

As a wave a nausea struck her, Siri's throat clamped down as not just

the memories of embarrassment she had of running away, but also the realisation that she had heaped a pile of emotions on her younger brother he probably didn't quite fully understand as she saw his eyes fill with pain and anger, guilt and sadness; she instantly regretted saying \_anything.\_

"Leif-" she said shakily, reaching a hand out towards him, "Leif, I'm-"

"DON'T TALK TO ME!" Leif screamed furiously, jerking away from the girl's comforting hand. "I DON'T WANT TO TALK TO YOU \_EVER \_AGAIN!"

"Leif, I'm sorry!" Siri pleaded, as Leif raced up the stairs, two at a time. "I...I didn't mean-"

"LEAVE ME ALONE!" Leif screeched, before he slammed the door on his sister's pleas with a mighty \_bang \_that not only shook the portraits on the downstairs walls, but Siri herself as she continued to stare at the spot her brother had just been moments before.

A little squawk of anxiety snapped Siri out of her stunned daze, and the teenager glanced down to find Midnight rubbing up against her leg in comfort, her wide eyes gazing up at her friend in concern. Heaving a great sigh, Siri bent down and scooped the tiny dragon up into her arms, who immediately snuggled up against her in sympathy.

" I had just had to open my big mouth, didn't I, girl?"

\* \* \*

><p>As the snow heaped up on the windowsills and what early evening light there was failed, the house was as quiet as the storm outside - something that did not happen in the Haddock household for long, let alone on Berk. Siri tried to get through to Leif once more, not long after it was dark enough to need to light candles, banging on his door. "Leif, I'm sorry, please let me talk," but the only answer was the muffled thump of a pillow being thrown against a door. She waited an hour, or two. Just before she tried again, she realized she had not seen hide- nor-tail of Ingrid since dinner, and it was well past her bedtime, but she had not performed her nightly ritual of visiting the outhouse before bed, even if she was exhausted or had the great sniffles. As the tight, hot, burning sensation of worry began to rise in her throat again, she went to check on her little sister.<p>

"Ingrid." Siri rapped on the door gently, her ear straining to hear any sound inside the little bedroom. Frowning, she knocked again. "Ingrid, are you ok? You've been in there for hours. Ingrid?" No answer.

With nothing else for it, Siri pushed Ingrid's ajar door open to the sight of the little girl laying seemingly asleep, sprawled out on top of her covers.

'\_That's strange\_', Siri thought to herself. '\_Ingrid \_never \_goes to sleep on her own'.\_

As she approached, though, anxiety began to eat at the girl's stomach. Even in the dim candlelight, Siri could see that Ingrid's



cheeks were flushed and almost hot to the touch as she gently touched her younger sister's arm to check if she was awake. Taken aback by the heat Ingrid was radiating, Siri took a firm grasp of her arm in an attempt to wake her, but became rock-rigid when she felt how warm Ingrid's arm \_really was\_. Remembering what she had heard at the healers, Siri put her hand to Ingrid's forehead and paled at how warm the young Viking girl was.

Ingrid was burning up.

Terrified, Siri shook the girl's shoulder. "Ingrid! Ingrid, wake up!"

"Mmphhh," she mumbled sleepily. Stirring slightly, the four year old cracked open one eye, before almost immediately closing it again as she drifted back into slumber.

Her heart pounding, Siri glanced wildly around the room, trying to think of \_something \_to do, and coming up with nothing, but more panic, Siri suddenly sprung up and raced from the room, down the hall to Leif's bedroom, still shut up tightly from the outside world.

"Leif!" Siri screamed in a panic. "Leif open up!"

"GO AWAY!"

"Leif, I\_ know \_you're angry," Siri hurriedly said, before Leif could argue, "but I need your help. Ingrid's burning up and I don't know what to do!"

The sound of loud banging suddenly came from inside the room, followed by a loud "ow!" as Leif crashed to the floor as if a drunken Gronkle was rampaging around his room, before his door suddenly flew open, almost knocking Siri down in the process as Leif's panic stricken face appeared before her.

"What's wrong with her?" he asked his sister worriedly, who shook her head frantically.

"I don't know!" she exclaimed, as she and Leif raced back to the little girl's room. "I just went to check on her and there she was, fast asleep, with her head hotter than a dragon!"

"But..." Leif began, with a worried glance towards the little girl's bedroom. "...but she was just fine at dinner! She was quiet...but-"

"...But she was too quiet, even for her," Siri finished for her brother, as they entered her room, where Ingrid still slept; having not even moved from her original position. Approaching her, Siri sat beside her, and placed a gentle hand on the little girl's forehead, before carefully brushing the auburn bangs away from her face. As she did so, Leif quickly placed a hand on his sister's forehead and just as soon retracted it.

"Ow!" he exclaimed, surprised, as he glanced down at the slumbering girl. "I've heard of being hot, but this is silly! She's boiling!" He flicked his eyes towards his older sister, a frown creasing his brows. "Didn't she say she felt sick in the tummy before?" he asked

her, his tone accusing.

"Well, I didn't think she was actually sick!" Siri responded angrily, as she kept her eyes down from her brother's irritated glare. "I thought she was just tired, that's all! I mean...she did look a little flushed when mum and dad left, but..."

"...But you ignored her," Leif said, with a shake of his head. "Nice going, sis."

"Don't you dare blame me!" Siri snapped. "You didn't notice either!"

"Oh, yeah, well...!"

"Siri?" Ingrid's exhausted voice interrupted the bickering pair, causing them to start and look down towards her. "Siri...I feel hot." She let out a little whine as she moved a bit. "And my head hurts. And my throat."

"Yuck," Siri responded gently, as she rested a hand on the girl's sweaty forehead. "I'm sorry, Ingrid, I know you must feel terrible. Just try to relax."

As Ingrid gave a slight nod, Siri quickly looked up at her brother with a worried glance.

"Leif, we can't keep fighting," she said. "I know you're upset with me, but right now, Ingrid is more important." Holding out a hand to the eight year old, she managed a tiny smile. "Truce?"

Looking between at his sister's outstretched hand to his little sister's reddened face, Leif gave a deep sigh, before turning his attention back to the teenager, hand outstretched.

"Truce," he agreed with a slight smile. "So...what are we going to do?"

"I don't know," Siri said, her panic levels rising once more. "I've never had to deal with this before. Maybe I should go and get Lagetha..."

"It's still snowing," Leif pointed out, as he nodded his head towards Ingrid's window shutters; closed up against the weather outside. "You'd never even find Lagetha out there it's so heavy! I've been watching it," he added at Siri's inquiring look. "Isn't there something we can do?" Leif suddenly asked as a thought came to his head. "Haven't mummy and daddy done something for a fever before?"

At those words, Siri's eyes suddenly brightened. "Yes, they have!" she exclaimed, jumping up from the bed and before Leif could get in a single word, she bounded off down the stairs as quick as lightning. Uncertain as to what was happening, Leif turned his attention back to the little girl beside him, now tossing and turning in her sleep, her head sweating so profusely that her auburn bangs were clinging to her forehead. Reaching out a hand, Leif gently moved them off her face, surprised at the warmth radiating off her pale white skin.

"Don't worry, Ingy," Leif said gently to the four year old. "Siri

will make you feel better in no time."

"I'm cold," Ingrid whispered sleepily.

"I'll get you another blanket, if you want?" he asked, making a move to get up, only to be stopped by Siri, as she reappeared in the doorway.

"Don't give her any more blankets," she said quickly, as she rushed into the room, a sodden towel in hand, and a cup in the other. "It'll just make her feel worse." Placing the cup on the table beside the bed, she sat down beside her two younger siblings, before turning her attention to Leif's bewildered look as to the items she'd brought in.

"A cool towel to place on her head," Siri explained, as she placed the wet item on the little girl's head, who jumped at the sudden coldness. "I know it's cold, Ingrid, but I promise it will help." Hearing this, the young girl relaxed into her sister's touch as she dabbed at her forehead.

"When you were 2," Siri explained to her brother, with a quick glance towards him, "you got sick in the middle of the night. I remember mum saying that she wasn't going to bother Lagetha, so she went downstairs and got a cool towel and placed it on your head for a little while, while dad brewed up some fever tea for you to sip on." She nodded to the brew sitting on the table. "We'll give tiny bits of that to Ingrid until she's drunk it all, and after that, she should feel a little better. It's all we can do."

"Did I feel better?" Leif asked her, who turned to him with a small smile.

"Your fever went down after a little while," Siri said with a nod. "And hopefully, it should work for Ingrid, too." She adjusted the compress to Ingrid's head, before turning to Leif. "Can you help her sit her up? She needs to drink this."

Nodding, Leif, placed his hands behind the little girl's back, and gently coaxed her into a sitting up position, before Siri brought the tea to her lips.

"No!" Ingrid exclaimed, turning her head away. "That yucky!"

"I know it tastes funny, Ingrid," Siri agreed, with a quick look at the disgusting concoction, "but it help you feel a \_lot \_better, I promise."

With a suspicious look at the contents, Ingrid gave a nod before Siri tipped some of the tea into her mouth. Ingrid shuddered, but allowed the older girl to continue tipping the drink into her mouth, until it was all gone.

"Good girl, Ingrid," Siri said proudly, as she allowed the young girl to lie back down. "Now just try to get some sleep, okay? That will help get rid of the nasty bug."

With a tiny giggle, Ingrid buried herself into her pillow, just as Siri placed her old blanket over Ingrid's slightly shivering body, before bending down to give her a kiss on the cheek. Within moments,

Ingrid was fast asleep once again.

"I'm just going to stay in here tonight. Make sure she's alright," Siri said, as she spread out another pillow and blanket on the wooden floor. "She may need another cup later on, anyway."

"I'll stay too," Leif said, as he spread out another area of the room for himself.

"You don't have too, I can manage-" Siri began, but she quickly shut her mouth once more as Mossy curled up beside Leif on the hard floor, and began to doze. If the dragon was staying there, so would Leif, no matter what the fourteen year old said. Instead, she shrugged and sat down on her makeshift blanket, holding out a hand to stroke Midnight's scales, who had just ambled into the room, before plopping herself down beside her friend.

She sat awhile in silence, stroking Midnight's smooth black scale, concentrating on staring anywhere away from her brother. Finally, after a mixture of time, a little bit of bile, and worry combined to give Siri the courage to gaze at her brother, who was performing the same ritual of eye avoidance she had been performing. Sighing, she broke the silence.

"Leif," she started slowly. "I'm sorry for what I said earlier. I know I shouldn't have said it."

Leif's hand stilled on Mossy's wings, but made no notion of looking up. Seeing this, Siri breathed a sigh of frustration.

"Leif, I mean it," Siri said, as she edged closer to the eight year old. "I know I was angry before, but I shouldn't have taken it out on you. I guess I was just mad that I was grounded, that's all."

Observing the boy, Siri watched as Leif slowly looked up from his little dragon, and into Siri's eyes, making Siri flinch at the hurt she saw in his bright emerald eyes.

"Did you really run away when I was baby?" he asked her, making Siri's stomach drop.

"Leif, that's not something we-"

"Did you?" Leif interrupted, cutting Siri off mid sentence. "Tell me, Seer. Please?" he added as Siri watched him, biting her lip in the process. Hearing this, though, she heaved a sigh.

"Yes," she admitted hesitantly, avoiding her brother's gaze. "When you were about three months old."

Leif's eyes widened, taken aback. "W...Why?" he asked, dejectedly. "Was I really so much trouble that you ran away?" he asked her.

"Oh, Leif, of course not-"

"Then why'd you run away?" Leif demanded, shooting his older sibling a hurt look. "Did you hate me?"

"No, of course not!" Siri exclaimed, flabbergasted, as she reached

out to grip his hand. "Leif, I have never ever hated you, so don't even bother thinking that."

"Then, why?" Leif persisted, boring into Siri's face so fiercely that she wanted to look away. "What did I do?"

"Leif, you didn't do anything, except do what all babies do," Siri said with a sigh, glancing back down to Midnight, snoozing by her feet. "From the day you were born, you cried a lot, and you were always getting mum and dad's attention, that I just...got jealous, I guess."

"So you ran away?" Leif inquired, incredulously. "Did mummy and daddy notice?"

"Of course they did," Siri replied quietly, her voice lowering rapidly as she remembered that day. "They were devastated." Seeing Leif's curious expression, Siri took a deep breath and started to explain. "I ran away in a storm like this." Siri nodded towards the direction of the window where snow was still falling heavily. "It was really bad, and I was caught in it all night. By the time mum and dad found me..." Siri trailed off.

"What happened?" Leif prompted, as his sister stopped. Hearing the question, though, she looked up with a serious expression.

"You have to remember, Leif, that I was only six years old," Siri explained gently, as she placed an arm around his rounded shoulders. "I was silly and jealous, and what I did was the dumbest thing in the world. I gave mum and dad a fright when they found me, sick and out of it." She frowned as her parents devastated faces swarmed before her eyes. "I've never seen them so upset," she mumbled, leading to Leif even leaning into her with a small smile, which Siri returned. "I guess I was wrong that mum and dad would have been better off without me," she added with a chuckle.

Leif raised his eyebrows. "I could have told you that," he said with a grin, causing Siri to snort loudly. Hearing the noise, Ingrid mumbled a bit, but remained asleep.

"They've never let me forget it either," Siri agreed, lowering her voice as she glanced at her sister. "But they didn't want me to tell you in case you got upset. But that idea has gone out the window," she said with a deep sigh. "I'm sorry, Leif."

"Why did mummy and daddy not want me to know?" he asked, curiously, brows furrowed.

"I think they were scared you might have done the same thing," Siri said. "They were a little worried when Ingrid was born that you'd get as jealous as I did, but it never did."

"You barely ever heard her, though," Leif giggled, with a quick glance towards the little girl. "She was always asleep!"

Siri laughed. "You cried and screamed constantly, but when Ingrid was born, you barely ever heard her," Siri said incredulously.

"Remember? She was so quiet that-"

"-mummy and daddy thought there was something wrong with her!" Leif

finished for her with a wide grin spreading across his face. "I remember them thinking that."

"Same here," Siri chuckled, as she moved into a more comfortable position on her blanket. "I guess it was only me that got jealous in this household."

Leif chuckled quietly, before he glanced back up at his sister with a sheepish smile. "Siri," he began awkwardly, "I'm sorry for getting us grounded. I should never have gotten dad's flight suit out. It was hard \_not \_to try it."

Siri shook her head with a smile. "I shouldn't have tricked you into flying it, though," she admitted. "I just thought it would be funny, but I guess it wasn't. It was both of our faults that we're stuck in here."

"I am sorry that you couldn't go out with \_Gerold\_," Leif's face twisted in disgust at the name. "Seriously, what is so cool about him?" he asked the teenager. "He's...annoying."

"You're only saying that because you think Lennart is awesome," Siri grinned. "Gerold is pretty cool if you actually get to know him. In saying that, though," Siri added with another grin thrown Leif's way, "he \_is\_ pretty full of himself sometimes, isn't he?"

"Finally, she notices!" Leif exclaimed, with a smirk. "But I am sorry you couldn't see him today."

Siri shrugged with a smile. "We'll reschedule," she said. "He might have just wanted to show off some dragon racing moves anyway."

Leif coughed, "full of himself!" Seeing Siri's glare though, he immediately shut up. They fell silent.

"Does this mean you forgive me?" Leif suddenly piped up after a few moments. Hearing this, Siri glanced over at him, a smile twitching at her lips.

"I guess so," she said with a sigh. "I think I was just really mad that we got grounded that I blamed you. I never meant anything by it. But I can't promise I'll be nice for the next week. I am stuck inside with just you and Ingrid, after all."

"Same here," Leif admitted, before he emitted a huge yawn. Glancing around the room, he frowned. "What time is it?" he asked. "It feels\_ really\_ late."

"It \_is\_ \_late," Siri said, surprised, as she observed the length of the shadows from the candles. "It's well after midnight, already." She yawned. "We better get some sleep. Mum and dad will be back in the morning."

"If they can get through the snow," Leif said sleepily, the late hour hitting him like a herd of Gronkles.

"Good point," Siri said, as she stood up to reapply Ingrid's cold compress. Feeling the sudden coolness on her skin, she awoke in surprise.

"It's just me, Ingrid," Siri said gently, as she wiped the little girl's forehead. "How do you feel?" She felt the girl's forehead. It was still fairly warm, but it was a definite improvement.

"A little better," Ingrid replied drowsily, before she gave out a tiny cough. "My throat hurts," she added.

"Have a drink of water, and go back to sleep. Leif and I will stay with you," Siri smiled, as she pushed the water towards her. Ingrid took it with a sleepy smile.

"Thank you," she said gratefully, taking a sip and laying back down. "Are you and Leifey not mad now?"

Siri chuckled. "No, Ingrid, we're not."

"Yay," she replied, as her eyelids fluttered closed. In the next moment, her breathing became steady. Siri moved the blanket further up and glanced back towards her brother. He too, was fast asleep, his mouth hanging open as small snores emitted from the boy.

Siri rolled her eyes. "Thanks for the help, Leif."

\* \* \*

><p>"Do you think they've killed each other yet?"<p>

Startled, Hiccup glanced over at his wife, eyebrows raised. "Excuse me?"

Astrid snorted. "I was talking about the kids," she explained, brows creasing with worry. "I'm starting to think it was a mistake to leave Siri in charge," she added nervously. "What was I thinking?!"

"Well, it's too late for that now," Hiccup pointed out, a small grin forming on his lips. "Whatever they've done to each other is now your problem."

Astrid raised a brow at him. "Excuse me?" she asked. "Why is it my problem? You agreed that Siri needed to learn some responsibility!"

"Yeah, but I'm not the one who suggested it," Hiccup shrugged, throwing a grin her way. "I deny any responsibility to what we might find."

"Oh, thank you so much, babe," Astrid replied dryly, with a roll of her eyes. "I feel the love."

"Happy to be of service, milady."

"Yeah, I bet you are," Astrid said, unable to stop a smile from twitching at the corners of her lips as she glanced at him. Seeing this, Hiccup returned her smile, before glancing down as Berk finally came into view.

"Woah!" Hiccup exclaimed in surprise, looking down at the snow covered island as they came in to land. "That must have been one heck of a snowstorm last night!"

"You can say that again," Valka said, as Toothless and Stormfly came in to land. "It didn't let up until a few hours ago." She glanced at her son and daughter-in-law in surprise. "Are you telling me you guys didn't get this last night?" she asked them incredulously. "We never thought it would let up!"

"Well, no," Hiccup admitted, as he jumped off Toothless's saddle, who immediately started rolling around in the snow. Seeing this, Hiccup shook his head with a grin, before glancing back to his mother. "No, Outcast Island got snow last night, but nothing like you all got apparently."

"Huh, weird," Valka said with a shrug, as Astrid looked around their surroundings, a frown forming on her face.

"Where are the kids?" Astrid asked her mother-in-law, curiously. "Have you seen them?"

"No," Valka said, surprised. "I haven't seen them since yesterday."

Astrid and Hiccup exchanged a nervous glance. "So..." Hiccup began nervously, "...they didn't come to you for help last night? For anything?"

"They probably couldn't have," Valka said anxiously. "The snow was so bad last night they probably wouldn't have risked venturing out. I'm sure they're alright, though," she added hurriedly, seeing her son's panicked expression. "If anything was seriously wrong, they would risked it no matter what, knowing Siri."

"No, knowing Siri, she would have dealt with it on her own," Astrid pointed out, as she glanced up to the house and back. "Hiccup, we better get home," she said, as she grabbed hold of his hand, and pulled him towards the house. "We'll see you later, Val!" she called back.

"Tell me later if they're alright!" the dragon woman called back, as Astrid dragged her husband up the hill, panting and moaning.

"Would you slow down already?" Hiccup puffed. "Man with a metal leg here."

"Worried mother who left an angry fourteen year old in charge last night here," Astrid countered, not even bothering to slow down.

"You win," Hiccup groaned, as Toothless gently pushed him up the hill and the house, which was covered in white powder, deep up the windowsills and roof eaves, resulting in a slight sparkle when the morning light hit it at the right angle. Ignoring this, though, Astrid approached the door one minded, and pushed it open, only to find the lower level of the house dark and empty. Astrid's stomach dropped.

"Where are they?" she asked nervously, with a look towards Hiccup, who was standing there in bewilderment. "They haven't left, or Valka would have seen them." She glanced up to the upper level. "They couldn't be still bed. Could they?" she asked Hiccup, who gave a slight shrug.



"They could be avoiding each other, too."

"Good point," Astrid said, as she hurried over to the stairs, and climbed them two at a time. "Guys where are you!" She opened Siri's door, only to find her room empty. Her heart quickened. "Guys!"

"Astrid," Hiccup said quietly, as he stood in the doorway that was Ingrid's room. "Astrid, I found them."

"In Ingrid's room? But what are they-?"

"Shh," Hiccup hushed, gesturing for her to come over. "Just come and look."

Perplexed, Astrid slowly walked over to the tiny bedroom and poked her head in the doorway, only for her mouth to drop open at the scene in front of her.

All three Haddock kids were fast asleep in the tiny bedroom; Ingrid curled up under her blanket on the bed, whereas her two older siblings were spread eagled on their makeshift beds on the floor, dragons alongside them. Leif was lying on Mossy's tail, who didn't seem fazed by it at all, with his mouth hanging open in a slight snore.

"Well, that's familiar," Astrid chuckled, seeing it, before she glanced back towards her husband. "What in Thor's name went on here last night?"

"That's what I'd like to know," Hiccup agreed, unable to take his eyes off the scene. "They couldn't stand to be in the same room as each other when we left."

Hearing voices, Siri suddenly stirred and opened her eyes a crack, only to see her parents standing in the doorway. Upon noticing them, she cracked a sleepy smile.

"Hey mum, dad," she said with a wide yawn. "When did you get home?" Looking past them at the small amount of light coming from the downstairs windows, she frowned. "Come to think of it, what \_time \_is it?" she asked them, sitting up with a groan.

"Around 10," her mother answered as she came into the room. "Dad and I left just after sunrise. What are you all doing in Ingrid's room anyway? And asleep on the floor of all things?"

"Oh," Siri said, with a quick glance towards Ingrid, still fast asleep, despite the chatter. "Ingrid fell ill with a fever last night and Leif and I were looking after her. Well, \_I\_ was," Siri added, with a look at her brother, starting to stir on the floor. "He fell asleep."

"A fever?" Hiccup asked his daughter worriedly, as he rushed over to his little girl. "What's the matter with her?" Sitting beside the four year old, he gently shook her awake. "Ingrid, are you alright, sweetie?"

"I think she just has a bug or something," Siri spoke up quickly, as Ingrid stirred awake. "Her fever went down pretty quickly after some

tea."

"Hey, daddy" Ingrid said croakily, as she looked up at her father.  
"You back."

"I'm back, sweetie," Hiccup smiled as he kissed his daughter's forehead, which was still warm. "Apparently you had a yucky night."

"Yeah," Ingrid said, as Astrid sat down beside her husband. "I felt really sick. My throat still hurts."

"Sounds like throat fever to me, sweetie," Astrid said gently, as she took a quick look. "But you seem better now. By the looks of it, your sister did a good job." She turned to look at her eldest daughter, who was standing behind her with a small smile. "Well done, sweetie. I'm proud. You did exactly the right thing."

"After I ran around like a dragon with its head chopped off," Siri admitted sheepishly. She nodded to Leif, who was finally awake and giving his father a hug. "It was Leif who calmed me down. Then he fell asleep and let me do all the work," she added with a grin.

"Hey, I helped," he said, returning the smile.

"Speaking of which," Hiccup said, as he took Ingrid in his arms. "What happened to make this-" he nodded to the pair grinning at each other, "-happen? When we left, you two were glaring daggers at each other-"

"-Not we're complaining," Astrid added with a chuckle. "But what happened?"

Siri and Leif looked at each other nervously, before glancing back to their parents with huge sighs, before they started to explain about the argument they'd gotten into the night before and how Ingrid being sick brought them into the same room again.

"They fight a lot before I get sick, too," Ingrid admitted, before her emerald eyes widened in horror. "Sowwy, Siri."

Siri sighed. "That's alright, Ingrid. Mummy and daddy would have found out sooner or later that we were still fighting." She looked at her parents. "How much longer are we stuck in here for?" she asked them.

Hiccup and Astrid looked at each other, expressions of guilt crossing their faces. "Well..." Astrid started slowly, "...not long at all. Actually, your father and I are going to cut back your grounding."

All three Haddock kids' mouths dropped open. "What?" Siri asked her mother, disbelieving what she had just heard. "But you said..."

"Seer, the thing is, we grounded you and Leif for not being responsible," Hiccup explained, as he placed an arm around her shoulders. "But what you did for your sister last night completely threw that back in our faces. Now, we're not saying what you did

wasn't stupid," Hiccup added as Siri and Leif went to speak, "because it was-

"-Very\_ stupid, actually," Astrid agreed with a glance at her two eldest.

"-But the thing is," Hiccup continued sheepishly, "I'd be a hypocrite if I told you never to do it when I did stupider things then \_that \_when I was younger."

"That's for sure," Astrid said, with a nod. "Your father making and\_ trying\_ that thing was stupid in itself."

"Thanks, sweetheart."

"Anytime, babe."

Siri and Leif giggled at the banter between their parents.

"The point is, that we shouldn't have been so quick to ground you for something that we did before ourselves," Hiccup told them, making the two kids look at each other hopefully.

"Does that mean we're not grounded anymore?" Leif asked him hopefully.

"No, you're still grounded," Hiccup said, making Leif's face fall. "Just not for as long. You're to stay inside for today and tomorrow, and \_then \_you are all free."

"Yes!" Siri exclaimed cheerfully, as she flung her arms around her father's neck. "Thanks, dad! I'll have to send Midnight to Gerold so we can reschedule."

"Yuck," Leif added, as he stuck his tongue out, but he too gave his parents a grateful hug. "Thanks, mummy. Daddy."

"Thank you," Ingrid repeated with a small smile.

"I don't think you'll be going anywhere for a few days, sweetie," Hiccup reminded her gently, as he shifted her in his arms, before glancing up at his two eldest who were making their way out of the room.

"Guys?"

"Yeah, dad?" they asked, as they stopped in the doorway.

"Next time you want to try out one of my old inventions, just ask, alright? It would have saved a lot of problems."

Siri and Leif gave their father an incredulous look.

"Now you tell us!"

\* \* \*

><p><em>Yeah, I know the chapter was long and a little bit repeated, and for that I'm sorry, but I hope you liked it! :) I wanted to showcase a very typical sibling relationship while showcasing 3 very

different personalities while being really mad at each other, and I think I achieved that. Their personalities definitely showed this chapter! And Leif may act older than he is, but after with kids that age for a while now, you'd be surprised how mature they can sound.<em>

\_As you can probably tell from this chapter, Siri and Leif do fight a lot, but it's never usually this bad. They pick and tease mainly, but this chapter brought up some anger and feelings that Siri has been keeping to herself since she ran away all those years ago and I thought it was a good time for them to come out. Both of them are also very protective of Ingrid after what happened during her birth, which is why her being ill helped them bring these feelings out so much. I really enjoyed writing about just the kids, so thanks for the reviewers who suggested a sibling storyline! The siblings won't fight \_\_\*\*as\*\*\_\_ bad from now on. \_

\_Now, if I confused anyone in this chapter when Astrid said Ingrid had 'throat fever', that's just an old name for 'strep throat' before it was officially named. I did read the name somewhere once, but now don't remember where. It works anyway and it wasn't too severe, I just wanted to showcase the siblings working together to help her.

—

\_Ok, so a few of you may have helped up a few hints for the next chapter in here, and if so, kudos to you! Next chapter will take place only a few days after this one and will detail about Siri and Gerold's relationship. Siri is definitely growing up from here on in! Now, this chapter \_\_\*\*will not\*\*\_\_ will be as long or nowhere near as long as this one, so hopefully it won't take as long to finish, but I can't promise that. It will be up as soon as I can post it though. \_\_\*\*Thank you so much for all of my readers for waiting so patiently for this chapter and not begging for updates. Thank you, thank you, thank you! It helped so much :D\*\*\_\_

\_\*\*DON'T FORGET TO REVIEW! Just remember NO FLAMES, but KIND constructive criticism is always accepted! \*\*\_

\_Thanks for reading!\_

## 41. Chapter 41: Gerold

\_PLEASE READ ALL AUTHOR'S NOTES IN THIS CHAPTER BEFORE ANYONE GETS ANNOYED IN REVIEWS! :P THANKS! (Although I am looking forward to people's reactions!) \_

\_Hey guys, I'm soooooo sorry I'm late again, and I highly apologise. Not only have I been busy, but I will admit that this chapter gave me a bit of trouble in the beginning and I suffered lack of motivation because of it. Once I got into the chapter, though, it came a little easier. Thanks for all waiting patiently though.\_

\_So, this chapter is going to get some mixed reviews, which is why I ask for everyone to read these notes as this chapter is about Siri and Gerold. Enough said :) It turned out way longer than I expected (as usual), but I'm happy with the way it turned out.\_

\_On with the chapter! :D\_

\*\*\_I KINDLY ASK MY READERS TO PLEASE READ MY AUTHORS NOTES AT THE END OF THE PAGE ABOUT UPDATES. I HAVE BEEN POSTING UPDATES REGULARLY AS TO WHY I AM SO DELAYED AND WHAT I HAVE BEEN DOING LATELY, BUT I'M AFRAID PEOPLE SEEM TO MISS THEM. THANKYOU! :)\_\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 41 â€" Gerold<span>

\* \* \*

><p>"Mummy, can I have a glass of water?!"<p>

"Mum, I feel hot!"

"Mummy, have you seen Batsy?!"

"Oh, you've got to be kidding me," Siri mumbled, jamming a pillow over her ears. "Isn't there anything else they can do besides whinge?"

"Mummy, I wants Batsy\_!"

Siri rolled her eyes. "Apparently not," she huffed, pressing the pillow closer to her ears as she tried to focus on the book in front of her; with little success, as Ingrid's high pitch wailing began to pierce the air.

"\_Mummmmmmy!"\_

Siri growled. "That's it!" Slamming her book shut, Siri quickly stood up, allowing the pillow to fall to the ground. "Mum, I'm going over to Len's. I'll be back later! Maybe," she added quietly, as she made her way towards the door only to hear her mother's concerned voice behind her.

"Hold up, Seer, I wouldn't be going over there if I were you," Astrid said quickly as she rushed out of Ingrid's room, face red with exertion.

Siri frowned. "Why?" she asked, exasperated, looking up at her mother. "I thought I was free now?"

"Oh, you are," Astrid confirmed with a nod. "But I think it might be better if you stay away from Len's, though. Considering the circumstances, that is," she added, with a quick glance behind her.

"But," Siri began, bewilderment crossing her features, "I thought kids our age don't usually get this?"

"I was thinking more along the lines of Rona, not Len," Astrid explained worriedly. "You could still pass it on to her."

"Oh...yeah." Groaning loudly, she flopped herself back onto the couch. "Great," she said. "Now what am I supposed to do?"

"Why don't you go see Gerold?" Astrid suggested with a grin. "You did have plans with him the other day, didn't you?"

"Well, we did have plans until somebody-" Siri directed her voice in the direction of Leif's room, "-ruined them for me-"

"I heard that!" came Leif's feeble voice from the upstairs room, making Siri grin sheepishly, as a resounding cough sounded from the young boy. "Don't make me infect you!"

"And... I'm out," Siri said hurriedly, as she made for the door. "If you need me, I'll be with Gerold, mum."

"Just be back before dark," Astrid reminded her.

"Will do," Siri said, as her sister's loud voice sounded again from upstairs.

"MUMMY!" \_

"Do me a favour and send your father home while you're at it," Astrid said, frustration evident in her tone as she approached the little girl's room. "One more 'mummy' and I swear I'm going to lose it."

"Why do you think I'm leaving?" Siri grinned, shutting the door on her frazzled mother.

"Gee, thanks!" was all the teenager heard before she took off down the hill, only to run into her father on the way.

"Oh, sorry dad!" Siri exclaimed sheepishly, stretching out a hand for her father, now sprawled out on the ground; Toothless guffawing beside him at the sight.

"Gee, Seer, what's the rush?" Hiccup grunted, as he hauled himself to his feet on the snow covered ground. "You look like you're trying to escape from the house." Siri raised her brows in amusement. "Oh," Hiccup said, as he followed her glance. He chuckled. "Leif and Ingrid driving your mother up the wall?" he guessed, with an awkward rub of his neck.

"Yep," Siri grinned. "And mum just so happened to mention that I go and find you on my way to find Gerold, so they'll be driving you up at the wall very soon, too."

"That ship sailed long ago," Hiccup said, a smile twitching at his lips. "I've been living on the ceiling for years."

Siri groaned. "Daddddddd," she drawled, unable to contain a laugh. "That is the lamest joke I've ever heard."

"Yeah, well, I'm a dad to three crazy kids," Hiccup grinned, "you try coming up with something better."

"No thanks, I'll leave that to you," Siri smiled, as she stood on tiptoe to give her dad a kiss on the cheek. "Now if you excuse me, I have to go find Gerold. Wherever he is," she added, with a quick glance down towards the village.

"Try the Great Hall," Hiccup said, with a nod towards the building. "I saw him and his sister over there just a few minutes ago."

Hiccup's brows creased. "Going to hang out with him today?"

"I hope so," Siri said, oblivious to the hesitation in her father's voice. "We did have plans after all."

"Yeah, well, just be home before dark," Hiccup said. "I don't want you out too late with him."

"Dad, it's no different then being out with Len," Siri said, giving the older Viking a reassured smile. "It's not like we're dating or anything."

"Yet..." Hiccup mumbled.

"Plus I have no one else to hang out with," Siri continued, pretending that she hadn't heard her dad's comment. "Everyone else has younger siblings, and mum doesn't want me spreading around Leif and Ingrid's disease."

Hiccup chuckled. "I guess not, then," he agreed with a sigh. "But make sure you're home before dark, alright?" He turned his attention to the house. "I better get home before those siblings of yours drive your mother crazy," he sighed.

"Too late for that," Siri grinned, as she began to make her way down the hill. "It won't take long to see why I ditched!"

From behind her, Siri heard her father sigh. "Is it too late to call a council meeting?"

Giggling, Siri made her way down the hill towards the village square; there wasn't much out of the ordinary on the way save Bucket complaining about a Terrible Terror that had taken a certain fondness to his head. Walking briskly towards the Great Hall, she slowed and hesitated when she spotted a group of Viking teenagers where Gerold had asked to meet her. She was sure it was his friends, and was not comfortable with them yet - she hadn't even been introduced properly to them.

Thinking she could meet up with him another time, Siri began to make her way back from the direction she came, only to hear Gerold's voice float down from the top of the stairs.

"She's free!" he exclaimed loudly, making her turn back towards him. "I didn't think I was going to see you for awhile, Seer!" he added with a grin, before he turned to his group of friends. "I'll see you guys later," he said quickly, as he made his way over to where Siri was standing. "I promised Siri I'd hang out with her."

"You don't have too," Siri said hurriedly, as Gerold approached her. "If you guys have plans..."

"We were just talking," Gerold assured her with a wide smile, which made Siri's cheeks slightly warm. "That hardly equates to having plans. Besides," he added with a grin, "we had plans, didn't we? Although," he continued, with a quick look around, "I really thought you'd be with Len as soon as you were free, not me. Not that I'm complaining of course," he grinned, seeing Siri's amused expression. Hearing this, though, Siri gave the boy a sheepish grin.

"Well, I was going over there," she admitted, as she and Gerold started walking, "but mum stopped me. Leif and Ingrid have throat fever and she didn't want me spreading it around," she explained, seeing Gerold's puzzled expression. Upon this explanation, though, Gerold snorted.

"Gee, thanks," he said dryly. "And what makes you think I'd want it?"

"That's... you know that's not what I meant!" Siri exclaimed hurriedly, her expression flustered as she rushed her words. "It's...it's just that Len has-"

"Calm down, Seer, I was just pulling your leg," Gerold grinned, effectively cutting off Siri's frenzied explanation. "I knew what you meant."

"Well... you're... uh...you're such a jerk!" Siri stammered out, blushing vibrantly at the word trap the Viking teen had caught her in. Mortified, she pulled back her arm and effectively made contact with the boy's arm, making him laugh even harder, much to the teenager's embarrassment.

"Well, who would have thought someone as skinny as you could pack such a punch?" Gerold noted, wincing slightly as his arm began to sting. "You're dangerous, do you know that?" He frowned as his arm continued to sting. "Ouch."

"Runs in the family," Siri noted, as she bit back a laugh at the burly teenager's expression. "I guess that's one thing I actually do get from my mum."

"Yeah, no kidding," Gerold said, as he continued to rub his arm. "You could rival her if you keep this up."

"Nice to know," Siri smirked, as Gerold finally moved his hand away from the red patch on his arm. "Now, are we going to do anything or do I have to go over to Len's after all?" she asked him.

"I wouldn't," Gerold said with a grin. "If you go over there and get little Rona sick, you'll have more to contend with than just a guilty conscience. Snotlout would kill you."

Siri groaned. "You're telling me?" she said incredulously. "Who would have thought the man would be so protective over his daughter when he finally got one? And I thought my dad was bad."

"Well, to be fair, Rona is only six months old," Gerold noted with a thoughtful grin. "But even for a baby, I've never seen the guy be so protective in my life. You really want to risk his wrath?"

"Not if I don't have too," Siri said with a small smile. "Are you going to show me this new place you found or what?"

"Sure," Gerold smiled. "Go get your dragon and meet me back here in a few minutes, then."

Siri frowned. "I thought this place was on the island?"

"If it was on the island, your dad would have found it long ago,"



Gerold pointed out. "No, it's on another island not far from here. Don't worry, it's only a 10 minute flight or so," he assured her, as Siri threw him a questioning look. "We'll be home before it gets too late."

"We better be," Siri told him sternly, as she made her way in the direction of the stables. "Because I don't know about you, but I'm certainly not in the mood for another house arrest."

\* \* \*

><p>"Where is this place anyway?" Siri asked, looking around the area. "I thought my dad would have mapped out everything within a few days distance from Berk."<p>

"He probably has," Gerold agreed with a shrug. "I only found it by accident, so who knows?"

"Where\_ is\_ this place, though?" Siri asked again, squinting her eyes to look at her surroundings. "I thought you said it wasn't far."

"It isn't," Gerold replied, as he and his dragon flew up beside her. "It's a waterfall hidden behind some ivy on a little island. I only found it because \_somebody,\_ " he glanced down at his Monstrous Nightmare, who was pretending not to have heard him, "decided he didn't want to follow my lead anymore and instead, knocked me into the ivy."

Siri giggled. "Sounds like something Hookfang would do," Siri said, as she looked over at the dragon.

"More like something all Monstrous Nightmares would do," Gerold grumbled, to Siri's amusement. "They're all as stubborn as each other. Hey, watch it!" he exclaimed quickly as Nightmare suddenly caught himself a flame, startling the teenage rider slightly. "I'm still your friend you know!"

Emitting a low chortle, the dragon resumed his flight, leading Gerold to just shake his head at the stubborn reptile, before glancing over at his companion, hiding a laugh behind her hand.

"Is it just Nightmares or all dragons this stubborn?" he asked her. "Because I swear this one just likes to torture me."

"Oh, they're all stubborn," Siri assured him with a laugh, as she glanced down at her own Nadder. "You should see this one when you make her do something \_she \_doesn't want to do. Don't look at me like that, girl," Siri added as the dragon emitted a squawk. "We both know it's true. But that's just what you do, isn't it?" Siri cooed softly; reaching down to stroke the Nadder's violet scales. "Even Toothless likes to annoy the heck out of my dad at times."

"I've seen that, actually," Gerold sniggered. "Didn't he steal your dad's metal leg the other week and make him chase him all around the island?"

Siri snorted loudly. "It took dad hours to finally catch up with him," she laughed, tears of mirth pooling in her cerulean eyes. "And even then, he'd only give it back to me and Leif." She shook her head at the memory. "Not one of my dad's finest moments."

Gerold laughed. "Good to know it's not just my dragon, then," he said. "Although I'm pretty sure Arrow isn't a fan of me sometimes either. Or even Night Star for that matter," he added uneasily, as he noticed the dragon staring at him with an intensity that would scare the bravest of Vikings. He gulped nervously, before looking up at Siri. "Does she still not like me?" he asked. "She's known me for a year!"

Siri frowned as she looked down at her dragon. "I don't know," she admitted. "I've never really seen her take a dislike to someone like this. Maybe she doesn't like boys?" she suggested, uncertainly.

"She's fine with Lennart," Gerold pointed out, annoyance evident in his tone.

"Give her time," Siri reassured him gently, as she stroked the Nadder's scales once more. "Maybe she's just not used to having some competition around. I mean, she's been with Len from day one. And remember, Niddhog didn't like me for awhile either," she reminded him, as she glanced down at the Monstrous Nightmare, who looked up at her warily, before quickly turning his attention back to his flight.

"I guess so," Gerold said, before his eyes suddenly widened. "Hey, we're here!" he exclaimed, gesturing to a small island beyond a rock formation ahead. "I told you it wasn't far."

"It wasn't far, but it was further than you said," Siri sniggered, as their dragons made their descent. "I think your positioning skills need some work."

"Well, I was close," Gerold shrugged, as he urged Niddhog on, all the while scanning for the ivy bush, which he quickly spotted as they flew around the edge of the isle.

"Found it!" he announced triumphantly, flying closer to the green mass that stretched out before them.

"Are you sure?" Siri asked, hesitantly as she had a closer look at the bush. "It looks like its just rock behind it to me."

"Yeah, well, so did I, until I fell through it." Running his hand through the green mass, Gerold's eyes narrowed in concentration as he tried to find the right location. "Then again, maybe I should have noted the actual location."

"Yeah, no kidding," Siri mumbled, as Gerold's hand continued to hit rock. She sighed. "Please don't tell me we came all this way for nothing?"

"No, it's around here somewhere...and...ah huh...found it! I am awesome!"

"Full of himself is more like it," Siri mumbled under her breath with a roll of her eyes.

Turning to Siri with a smug grin, he waved a hand towards one specific spot in the ivy. "Told you I'd find it," he said, as the

smug grin was quickly replaced by a proud smile. "Ladies first."

Despite her earlier annoyance with the gloating teenager, Siri couldn't help but smile as pride evidently showed on the boy's face, and approaching the ivy, Siri was taken aback to see an opening behind the growing mass, with the smooth, dark, wet rock curling off to a dimly lit crevice. The ivy covering the entrance hid the crevice so effectively that she wasn't surprised no-one had found it before, even her dad. Shuffling through, one hand supporting herself as she sidestepped through the closest point of the passage, before it quickly opened back up again. Siri gasped and raised a hand to her mouth. A small crevice in the mountainside up above had a torrent of water pouring from it in a perfect waterfall, the water turning to mist before hitting the ground. The sun picked up the mist and made it blaze with the colours of the rainbow. Siri took a few steps and was surprised to feel thick, lush grass beneath her feet as she scanned this paradise hidden in a crack in a rock, a glade in the mountainside.

"Wow," was all the teenager could utter as she looked around the serene sight.

"I know, right?" Gerold replied, a large grin forming on his face as he came up beside the gobsmacked girl. "Who knew a place like this could be so well hidden?"

Nodding mutely, Siri turned towards the dragons, now rolling around like dogs in the soft grass, with a smile twitching at her own lips. She nodded to them. "You think the dragons knew about it all along?" she asked him with a grin.

Gerold's own brown eyes widened as he turned his attention to his own dragon, who looked up at him with a mischievous glance.

"Why you little-" Gerold snorted as he glared back at the Nightmare. "You could have chosen a different way to show me this was here, you stubborn dragon!"

Siri giggled, as Niddhog gave an unmoved snort, before returning to his fun. "I guess that's a no," she chuckled, before her eyes narrowed in bewilderment. "I don't get it, though," she said, with a quick glance towards Gerold. "If the dragons knew about this place, then why didn't Toothless show this place to dad?"

Gerold shrugged. "Maybe he didn't get this close to the ivy?" he suggested. "I don't know," he continued. "Maybe Toothless didn't know himself. I mean-" he looked over at Night Star, splashing around in the clear water by the falls, "-I don't think Night Star sensed it either."

Siri frowned. "I guess so..."

"Are you going to just stand around wondering why your dad didn't find this place?" Gerold asked her, with a quick glance back towards her, "or are you actually going to let me show you around?"

Siri grinned sheepishly. "Sorry," she said. She waved her arm towards the waterfall in front of them. "Lead the way, oh mighty Viking."

"Funny, ha ha," Gerold said dryly, as Siri giggled at his annoyed expression. He smiled, though. "Well, there's not \_too\_ much to show, but there are some areas that you need to know about or you'll go flat on your face."

"Know that from experience?" Siri asked him with a grin, as they approached the waterfall which sprayed drops of water on a circle of rocks surrounding the bottom of the formation, causing a glistening surface. Coming closer to this, Gerold instantly stopped and nodded to it.

"Whatever you do, \_do not\_ walk on those," he told her, quickly, "or you will go straight into the pond. And yes," he sighed, a faint flush rising in his cheeks, as Siri glanced at him knowingly, "I \_do\_ know that experience. The first time I came in here, I ran over these things and the next thing I knew I was flat on my face in the water with my dragon laughing at my bad luck."

"Remind me not to bring Leif in here, then," Siri said, as she bit back a laugh. "He'd do more damage to the place than he would himself."

Gerold chuckled, before gesturing to a dry spot on the ground, which Siri took without a second thought, before Gerold sat beside her.

"I'm surprised you're even talking to him," Gerold told her, honestly. "I thought you and him would be at each other's throats after getting grounded."

"We were," Siri told him, as she leant back on her arms in the grass. "But we called a truce after Ingrid got sick on the first night. I mean, it was both of our faults really..."

Gerold raised his eyebrows. "\_You're\_ taking the blame when he was the one who got the dumb thing out in the first place?" he asked her incredulously. "Thor, I wouldn't be talking to Sorsi this quickly if she got \_me\_ grounded. I didn't talk to her for a \_week\_ \_the\_ last time she blamed me for something."

"Yeah, well, that's you," Siri said, as she glanced up at the little bits of sky showing through the overhanging ivy. "And I thought you brought me out here to show me this place, not talk about my grounding," she added, annoyance edging into her voice as she spoke.

"Oh, yeah, sorry," Gerold apologised, as he looked up at the ivy as well. "Well," he said, with a nod to the small patch of blue sky ahead, "that's the only part of the sky you can see in here through the ivy, but it's enough, huh?"

"One patch of open space and the sun just happens to shine through it," Siri agreed with a laugh, as she turned her head towards the dragons, making the most out of the warm winter sunshine as they lay sprawled out in the area nearby. "And I thought \_the\_ cove\_ was pretty."

"I've never really been there actually," Gerold admitted with a quick glance towards the girl. "Like, my dad took me there a few times

before, but I've never really spent much time there before."

"My dad used to take me all the time when I was little," Siri said, smiling at the memory. "Whenever he had a day off, he'd take me or my mum out and just goof off. He still takes me, Leif and Ingrid; just not as much. If he does, we'll usually have a quick flight there or something."

"We can have a fly around here too, you know?" Gerold suggested, as he nodded at the high level of the ivy. "It's not as big as the cove, but the dragons love to have a flight around here. Well, Niddhog does anyway."

Looking over towards the dragon, Siri couldn't help but chuckle. "I don't think either of our dragons will be moving anytime soon," she noted with a nod towards them, lazing around in the patch of sunlight. "And I don't know about you, but I don't try to make Night Star do something she doesn't want to do."

"I don't either, because it doesn't work," Gerold agreed, before giving a shrug and edging over a patch of sunlight near the waterfall. "We'll do that later, then."

"What are we going to do until then, though...argh!" Siri jumped up, as a few droplets of water hit her shirt and ran down the front of it, causing her to shiver slightly as the icy water hit her skin. Looking up at Gerold, she saw him looking away from her innocently.

"Oh, is that how you want to play it is it?" she asked him, menacingly, as she too edged up to the roaring waterfall. "Well...how do you like it then?!"

Siri cupped her hands into the frosty, clear spring water and lifting her arms upwards, drenched Gerold from head to toe in the freezing liquid. Giggling, she watched as the sopping Viking teenager dramatically parted his hair. Lunging for the waterfall, Gerold barely missed Siri with a retaliatory attack and Siri took off towards the stream, giggling like a mad woman. Noticing the sounds, the dragons waded over to check out the commotion; a short glance was exchanged between the two young Vikings before they deftly splashed the dragons with the ice water, and ducked and weaved as the dragons themselves started to splash around with wing and tail. Despite their best efforts, all the dragons managed to hit was air, and just as Siri thought she was safe, she was suddenly battered with a blast of ice cold water at the back of her neck.

"Argh!" she screeched, jumping around like a dragon exposed to an eel. "That's cold, that's cold, that's cold!" Swiping her hand across her neck, Siri involuntarily shivered as the remaining water dried on her skin, leaving her neck feeling like ice. She glared daggers towards Gerold. "That was uncalled for!" she exclaimed with a laugh.

"What?" Gerold asked, crossing his arms in front of his chest, with a grin twitching at his lips. "Can't handle being beaten by raw sheer Viking power?" He flexed one of his arm muscles teasingly. "I'm the best!"

"Yeah, sure," Siri said with the roll of her eyes, "if freezing

someone to death is classed as-" she made quotation marks in the air, "-'winning', then sure, you\_ are\_ the best. \_But\_-" she quickly glanced around, a mischievous glint crossing her eyes, "did you expect...this?!"

Eyes widening in horror, Gerold could barely had time to react when Siri suddenly lunged at him, before pushing him head first into the waterfall, drenching the fifteen year old from head to toe with ice-cold water.

"COLD!" Gerold yelled frantically, as he burst out from behind the waterfall, wet to the skin, and his hair stuck to his forehead, leading to growls of laughter from both the dragons, and Siri, who took one look at the drenched Viking, and burst into peals of laughter, leading her to clutch at her sides, as she struggled to stop laughing.

"I win!" she exclaimed, her shoulders shaking violently as she struggled to reign in her laughter.

"You win, alright," Gerold replied, as he wrung out his shirt. "But gods, Seer, you didn't have to drown me!" he added, as he watched pools of water drip onto the grass from his hair and shirt. "You know I was just kidding when I said I was the best. Do you do this with Lennart?" he asked her, squeezing water out of his blonde locks.

"Lennart doesn't usually do this sort of thing, so no, not really," Siri admitted sheepishly, as she wiped the last remnants of water from her neck. "He never goes out of his way to show off."

"Don't you talk," Gerald grinned, as he wrung out the last of the water he could manage to get too, before sitting down on the soft grass once more. "Who was the one who was so determined to prove the Chief's daughter could do anything by trying to cheat my sister during that Snoggletog hunt?"

Siri chuckled. "I notice my dad has never run that competition again," she said, before she emitted a sigh. "But yeah, I know I did," she admitted. "But you have no idea how much people expect off me. Like, I know I'm the Chief's daughter and all, but it's like \_I'm\_ always expected to be the best, so I guess it's just a force of habit to compete with people."

As Siri spoke, Gerold frowned thoughtfully. "You know," he began slowly, with a glance towards the fourteen year old, "if you want to prove yourself a bit more, you should start hanging around with my group. We're always doing things like that." Gerold shrugged. "I don't know, but it might start showing some people that you're as Viking as the rest of them. Plus, I'd love to see you do some crazy things," he added with a chuckle.

"Yeah..." Siri said slowly, a slight frown creasing at her brows, "...I guess I could." She looked up at the ivy above them. "Maybe we should get going," she said, as she noted the position of the sun. "It's almost mid afternoon."

"Wait!" Gerold exclaimed quickly, as Siri went to stand up. "We don't have to go \_just \_yet. Besides," he continued, with a glance down at his still sopping clothes, "I really don't want to be flying in wet

clothes." He glanced up at Siri hopefully. "Can we just stay here a tiny bit longer? Until my clothes aren't sticking to me at least anyway," he added quickly, causing Siri to giggle.

"Yeah, I guess we can do that," she agreed, as she went to sit back down. "But what are we going to do until then?" Looking around, her eyes fell in the dragons, glancing curiously over at them from their spot in the sun. "Why don't we have a fly around here until your clothes are fully dry? Or are they sticking to you too much?" she added with a chuckle as Gerold awkwardly moved.

"No, we can do that in a minute," he said, as he made a move to get up, leading to a small object to fall out of his soaked pocket. He blanched as the item landed on the grass. "Crap," he said quickly, "I forgot about that."

"What is it?" Siri asked, curiously, as he hurriedly picked the object up. "It looks like metal."

"It is," Gerold said awkwardly, as he looked down at the thing in his hands. "I...urgh...made it. For you actually," he added hurriedly, as Siri's eyebrows rose in surprise. "Well, Sorsi helped of course," he admitted. "I'm not good at these sorts of things, but...urgh...here."

Curious, Siri held out a hand for the metal object which Gerold clumsily put into her hand. Looking down at it, the fourteen year old was surprised to find it was a metal bangle that Gerold had placed into her waiting hands. The steel and leather it was made of had been fashioned by amateur hands but obvious effort had been put into it. It took the shape of a long and jagged serpentine dragon making a wide spiral and was made to be worn on the upper arm. A small chip of bright red glass had been fashioned into an eye and the upper 'half' of the dragon had been darkened with charcoal, and a small wing protruded about three quarters of the way along and would sit on the outer edge of Siri's arm. It was quite the gift.

"It's...it's beautiful," Siri said slowly, raising her eyes to look at Gerold, who was twisting his hands nervously in his lap as she scrutinised the bracelet. "But...but what's it for?" she added nervously; although deep down, she had a feeling, resulting in a deep pit in her stomach.

"Well, we've been hanging out a lot lately," Gerold pointed out, his face blank, despite the nervousness etched in his tone. "And I thought it was time to...you know...give you a present...I guess," he added lamely.

Siri bit her lip, shyly. "You don't have to give me a present just for hanging out with me, though," she replied.

"Well, it's not\_ just\_ for that," Gerold admitted, as a small grin tugged at the edge of his lips. "You see, I...I wanted to ask you something and I...um...I wasn't exactly sure how to ask, so I made you something instead..."

Siri swallowed nervously. "And...and what was that?" she asked.

"Well...you see," Gerold started, his voice betraying his nerves.

"You're a really cool girl and all, and I was hoping...well I wanted...urgh..." Gerold groaned at his own inability to get out a simple sentence.

Siri frowned. "Gerold...maybe you should..."

"Siriwouldyouliketogooutwithme?!"

Gerold flushed bright red as the words came out came in a tangled rush before he could stop them, causing Siri to glance over at him, puzzled.

"What did you say?"

Gerold's face reddened further. "Would...would you like to go out with me?" he asked again, slowly, his face burning hotter than Niddhog's flame. "You know," he added quickly, seeing Siri's widening eyes, "if...if you want too, of course?"

And there it was, Siri thought, as the words finally tumbled from the nervous boy's mouth. After a year of friendship, Gerold had finally asked her out; albeit nervously. Sure, Siri had been expecting it, but now that the time had come, the fourteen year old was nervous to say the least. Did she really want to be in a relationship with this boy? Sure, he was cute, sweet and funny, but did she really want anything more with him? And what's more, was she ready to be in a relationship to say the least? She was only fourteen years old after all. And what about Lennart? Would this ruin their friendship?

All this thoughts buzzed around Siri's head like a swarm of irritated wasps as Gerold continued to watch Siri's face for any sign of an answer; but as she continued to sit there stone faced, he edged closer to her nervously.

"Erm...Seer?" he prompted her nervously, as she continued to stare blankly at him. "Are you alright?"

Hearing the boy's voice, Siri started. "Yeah, sure, I'm fine!" she quickly replied, as Gerold's voice cut through the fog of her thoughts. "I...I was just surprised, that's all!"

"Oh," Gerold said, his voice tinged with relief, Siri noted. "I thought you were..."

"Why don't we go for a quick flight?" Siri asked him, effectively cutting off anything else Gerold was going to say. "Maybe you'll dry off enough for the trip back," she added with a laugh, seeing Gerold's clothes, still drenched with water.

Gerold frowned. "Um...sure," he said, glancing down at his own shirt. "But what about...?"

"First one around the length of the cavern is the winner," Siri grinned, before she raced off towards her dragon, leaving a bewildered Gerold behind her.

"Ok..." Gerold said, as he followed the girl towards his own dragon. "...I guess we'll talk about this later, then..."



With a sigh, Siri slowly approached Night Star, with a slight pit of embarrassment in her stomach. She wished she hadn't blown off Gerold like she did, but what else could she do? She didn't\_ know\_ what she wanted to answer.

"What are you looking at me like that for?" Siri asked Night Star, who was looking down at her in a peculiar way. "I didn't know what to answer!"

With an unimpressed squawk, the Nadder gently hit Siri around the head with a lilac wing, causing Siri to shake her head, bewildered, as she jumped into the saddle.

"You dragons are hard to please, you know that?" she mumbled to the dragon. "I thought you didn't even \_like\_ Gerold."

The only answer she got out of that was another smack to the head.

"Ow."

"You alright?" Gerold asked her, as he and Niddhog came up beside them.

"Fine," Siri said, with a rub of her head. "Just an unimpressed dragon," she mumbled to herself as the Nadder below her shook with a grumble of laughter. She grinned at Gerold. "Ready to lose?"

Despite the confusion etched on the young man's face, Gerold couldn't help but grin back at the competitiveness Siri was portraying. "You're on," he said, looking around the area. "First one to fly around the whole area and land back here wins."

"Deal," Siri agreed with a grin as lowered herself onto the saddle.

"Maybe after this, we could then talk about..."

"...On you mark," Siri interrupted; although guilt easily showed on her face. "...Get set...go!"

Taken aback slightly, Gerold quickly urged Niddhog to follow after the eager teenage girl as she suddenly took off, and despite the confusion the boy felt, he couldn't help but let his competitive side take over as Siri and Night Star edged ahead of him as they made their way around the ivy covered cavern. Despite the slight lead that Siri had on the fifteen year old, it didn't take long before he had managed to catch up to the determined girl.

"What's wrong, Seer?" he grinned, as he caught up to her. "Can't handle the pace?"

"I was just waiting for you to catch up, that's all!" she countered, before urging Night Star ahead once more, only to almost have a run in with a tangle of ivy protruding from the rocks, leading Gerold to take advantage of the situation.

"See you at the finish line!" he called back, as he and Niddhog cruised ahead of the fuming pair, as they slowly caught back up, only

slightly keeping pace behind Gerold, who was so busy gloating that he failed to see another set of hanging ivy from an overhanging rock.

Opening her mouth to warn him, Siri quickly realised that even that wouldn't stop the situation from happening, so keeping her mouth shut, Siri quickly urged Night Star slightly to the right, as Gerold finally turned his attention back to the scene in front of him. Just in time to run smack bang into the ivy.

"Ouch," was all the fourteen year old could hear as she passed the unfortunate duo, as they struggled to disentangle themselves from the mess of plants.

"Well, that's what happens when you gloat, you know!" Siri chuckled, as she shot past them, tongue sticking out at him. "Good luck catching up!" she added, with a wave of her hand.

"I don't know about you, Nidd," Gerold said in awe, as he quickly shot after her. "But that's the last time I misjudge her." He winced as a shot of pain ran through his arm, as he followed Siri as fast as he could go. "Ow."

Despite Gerold's best efforts, though, it was to no effect. Just as he finally gained some ground, it was over as Siri edged ahead, and within moments, landed in a skidding halt beside the waterfall, with a triumphant cheer.

"I win!" she exclaimed cheerfully, as she jumped off Night Star's saddle, and proceeded to do a little jig, which her father had come to call the 'victory' jig.

"Only because I became a human rock decoration," Gerold grumbled as he jumped off Niddhog's saddle, rubbing his reddened arm. As he approached Siri, though, he grinned. "Thanks for the warning back there, by the way."

Siri grinned back. "It was going to happen, whether I warned you or not, so I decided to take it to my advantage."

"Gee, thanks," he replied, watching her as she continued her little dance. "Nice dancing," he commented with a chuckle. "What's \_with\_ that?"

"Honestly, I have no idea," she admitted as she stopped the weird little movements. "But Len seems to think its funny," she added with a chuckle.

Gerold chuckled. "Funny in a nerdy sort of way," he said. "But it's cute."

"Thanks," Siri said, as a faint flush rose on her already rosy cheeks. She looked down as Gerold continued to look at her, sheepishly, causing guilt to slowly fill the pit of her stomach.

"Look, Seer," Gerold started slowly, causing Siri to glance back up at him. "I'm sorry if I made you uncomfortable earlier. If I'd known you'd react this way, I never would have asked you..."

"No, Gerold, it wasn't you," Siri said quietly. "I...I shouldn't have reacted the way I did, especially when you were nervous enough as it was..."

"Yeah, well, I've never exactly asked out a girl before," Gerold said with a nervous laugh. "I thought maybe I'd said it wrong...or something..."

"No, what you said was really sweet," Siri said, her cheeks reddening even further as she spoke. She tucked a strand of her blonde locks behind her ear. "I guess..." She sighed, as she tried to find the right words. "...I guess I was just a little freaked out, that's all. I mean..." she chuckled, "...I've never been asked out before, and I just...didn't expect it I guess."

"I didn't mean to put you on the spot," Gerold said, apologetically, as he shyly moved over closer to the blushing teenager. "I...I guess I thought that after all the time we've been spending together that this would happen. But if you don't want to go out with me, it's ok, I mean..."

"It's not that I don't want to go out with you," Siri admitted shyly, as she glanced at him with small smile. "It's just..." Siri trailed off with a long sigh. "It's a big step isn't it?"

Gerold chuckled humorously. "It's not like I'm asking you to marry me," he joked, causing Siri's eyes to widen in horror at the thought, making the fifteen year laugh at the sight. "I mean, I only asked you out, didn't I?"

Siri snorted. "Well, in my parent's case, it was pretty much the same thing," she pointed out with a small smile. "They never once considered being with anyone else."

"Good point," Gerold chuckled. "But I'd say your parents are a special case in this, don't you think?"

"Yeah, I guess so," Siri agreed with a smile, before she frowned thoughtfully. "Gerold," she started slowly, as she glanced up at the boy. "If I say yes to you, will this..." She trailed off nervously. "...Will this stop us all from hanging out? I mean you, me and Len and everyone?" she added hastily, seeing his confused look. Upon voicing these thoughts, though, a look of understanding suddenly flashed across his pubescent face.

"Ohhh, so that's what you're worried about," Gerold said slowly. He smiled. "No, of course not," he assured her quickly. "Len's your best friend, and no matter who you hang with, he always will be. I'm fine with him hanging around with us. It's not like he's annoying or anything. Maybe a little wimpy..." he added thoughtfully, resulting in a rough punch to the shoulder by his companion. "Ow, I was just kidding," he chuckled, seeing the amused look on Siri's face.

"He's not wimpy," she said with a grin. "He can play use a sword as best as any Viking. He just prefers not to join in at times, is all..."

"Ok," Gerold said, throwing his hands up with a grin. "He's not wimpy." Glancing over at Siri, though, he suddenly gave her a shy smile. "So..." he said anxiously, "does this mean you'll..."

"Go out with you?" Siri finished for him, as a blush quickly made its way onto her pale cheeks, making her cheeks so bright she looked as if she were sunburnt. She smiled shyly. "Yeah," she said nervously. "Yeah, I'll go out with you. I mean, I could do worse, I guess," she quipped, making Gerold give out an amused snort.

"Thanks a lot," he said dryly, before he threw her a small smile. "Well," he added slowly, "I guess this means the Chief's daughter has her first boyfriend, huh? Wow," he said with a grin. "I'm going out with the heir of Berk. That's pretty cool."

"Yeah, well, don't expect any favours off dad," Siri teased him. "He's more than likely to kill you then anything."

"I better hope I can run fast, then," Gerold said, causing Siri to giggle, before she finally glanced up at the patch of sky that could be seen in the small cavern. She frowned.

"We better head off," she said, nodding to the whiteness of the sky. "It's going to snow, again."

Gerold looked up with a frown. "Yeah," he said disappointedly. "Yeah, I guess we better before we're trapped here." He glanced over at Siri with another shy smile. "I guess I'll take you home, then," he said quietly.

"Yeah," she whispered, moving a stray hair away from her eye. "Yeah, I guess you better."

Glancing at one another nervously, neither teen made the move to get up, as both they continued to sit there, their shoulders just slightly touching as they lay back on their arms in the grass. Slowly, Gerold timidly turned to face the blushing teenager, and before Siri could even register what was happening, the boy had gently tipped her chin up to face him. Siri's eyes widened as he leaned in. She closed her eyes.

It was barely a moment, and just a touch of the lips, and it was over, but that simple gesture caused Siri's face to burn like fire, and her stomach to bubble in exhilaration. Her eyes snapped open, only to find Gerold's face rivalling hers in redness, as he quickly jumped up and made his way over to the dragons in preparation for the flight home.

Siri couldn't believe it. At fourteen years old, she had just experienced her first kiss.

\* \* \*

><p>"On a scale of one to ten, how much will your dad hurt me, you think?"<p>

Siri glanced over at her friend, no sorry, her \_boyfriend, \_as they landed back on Berk, and gave a loud snort as she saw the genuine nervousness flash across his eyes.

"What? Trying to get out of walking me home, are you?" she asked him, her eyes twinkling with laughter, as she hopped off Night Star, who turned her head towards the boy with a daring glance.

"No," he replied quickly, trying his best at keeping his glance away from the piercing glare of the Nadder. "No, I was just...wondering if I was going to get out of there alive, is all. I'm sure more than your dad will want to hurt me." He grinned at Siri, as she raised an amused eyebrow at him. She rolled her eyes.

"You call yourself a Viking," she chuckled, just as the sky darkened slightly, making the two teens glance up with a frown.

"Looks like it's about to snow," Gerold said, with a groan. "Does this place ever have normal weather?"

Siri snorted. "It's Berk," she said. "Are you seriously asking me that question?"

Gerold grinned. "Good point," he admitted, before he gave the girl a small smile. "Want me to walk you home, then?"

"If you're not \_scared\_," Siri grinned back, as she took hold of his arm, before they made their way up to the Haddock house, which was eerily quiet for that time of the day. Leif and Ingrid were obviously still house bound, Siri noted.

"How crazy do you think your brother and sister are right now?" Gerold asked her, as they slowly walked through the town square.

"Probably driving my parents up the wall," Siri laughed, as they approached the hill her house stood on, only to stop in her tracks as she saw Lennart coming towards them, a surprised look on his face as he saw her.

"I'll...I'll keep walking," Gerold said quickly, as he noticed the boy, and he gave her a small smile as he continued on. He nodded to Lennart as he passed.

"I thought you were grounded?" Lennart asked her, with a smile, undeterred that she and Gerold were walking together. "Please don't say you snuck out?" he joked, although his expression was wary.

Siri chuckled. "No," she assured him with a smile. "I got let off the other day. I was staying at home today, too, but Leif and Ingrid were driving me nuts. Throat fever," she elaborated, seeing Lennart's confused expression. This explanation, though, made his eyes widen in understanding.

"Ahh," he said. He grinned. "No wonder you were with Gerold, then. I doubt my dad would have let you near Rona after being around that!" He frowned slightly as he turned his attention to Gerold, who was lingering halfway up the hill. "Although I don't remember Gerold ever offering to walk you home before."

"He...he wanted to talk to dad about something," Siri explained shyly, not meeting her friend's eyes. Noticing her uncomfortableness, Lennart frowned.

"You ok, Seer? You seem a bit quiet. For you anyway," he chuckled, making Siri smile softly.

"I'm ok," she said. "It's just..." She sighed. "Gerold asked me out today and...and I said yes. Is..." she looked at Lennart nervously, whose eyes widened in astonishment, "is that alright with you? I mean," she added quickly, "this won't ruin our friendship?"

"What?" Lennart asked, his voice slightly higher in surprise. "No. No of course it won't." Seeing Siri's nervous look, though, he sighed. "I'll admit it'll be a little weird all hanging out together now, I guess," he continued, putting his hand up to Siri, as she went to talk again. "But if you're happy, that's all that matters, doesn't it?" He gave her a small smile.

"Really?" Siri asked him, uncertainly, giving him a small smile in return. "I just don't want this to come between us."

"Seer, we've been friends since we were two," Lennart reminded her with a smile. "Nothing will change that. I mean...we always knew we'd start dating people eventually...I guess..."

Siri's smiled widened at these words and before Lennart could react, the teenager had flung her arms around him in a grateful hug.

"Thanks, Len," Siri said happily, giving him a swift kiss on the cheek. "I really appreciate this."

"Just promise me one thing, though, Seer?" Lennart asked her, quietly, making her frown curiously, but nod.

Lennart quickly glanced towards Gerold with a small frown, before turning his attention back to the girl in front of him. "Just promise me you'll watch out for yourself?" he asked her, careful not to say it too loud. "We may all be friends, but there's still some things about him I don't like."

Siri frowned. "Len, I know he can be full of himself, but..."

"Seer, just promise me," Lennart begged her. "I'm not being overprotective, just concerned."

Siri sighed, but couldn't stop a small smile from tugging at her lips. "Alright," she promised him with a small smile. "Thanks, Len. So," she continued, with a quick glance at Gerold, who was pointing up to the sky urgently, "do you want to hang out tomorrow? If we're not snowed in of course," she added with a glance back at Gerold's urgent gesturing, with a laugh.

"Sure," Lennart said with a smile. "I'll see you tomorrow."

"See you tomorrow," Siri smiled, before making her way back over to Gerold, only to be stopped by Lennart's voice behind her.

"And Seer?" he said gently, making her turn back towards him. "Congratulations. I mean it."

Siri smiled. "Thanks, Len," she said, before continuing to make her way back over to Gerold, not noticing the small glare Lennart seemed to throw in Gerold's direction.

"No, I'm not going to do anything, boy," Lennart assured his dragon,

as the reptile threw him a curious look. "I'd never do that to Seer." He looked at Gerold as he threw a grin towards Siri. "I just don't trust the guy is all," he added quietly, before he gestured to the Monstrous Nightmare to head off, who just gave an amused snort at the Viking.

"Oh, shut up, you," Lennart mumbled as they walked off.

"How'd he take it?" Gerold asked, as he watched Lennart walk off back down the hill.

Siri smiled as she glanced over at him. "Really well," she said. "I think he's fine with anything as long as I'm happy with it." She blushed slightly Gerold threw a grin towards her.

"See, I told you he'd be fine with it," he said, waving a hand to move on with the conversation. "Going out doesn't stop people hanging around with their friends..."

"Ewww!" came a raspy voice, startling the two teens. "Siri's going out with Gerold! Gross!"

"LEIF, YOU LITTLE SNEAK!" Siri screeched, seeing Leif hiding in the bushes at the side of the house. "Have you been spying on us the whole time? You're supposed to be sick!"

"I \_am \_sick," Leif said, and gave out a raspy cough to prove it. "But I saw you and Gerold together from my window and had to see what you were up too!" He looked at the two in disgust. "I can't believe you're going out with him! Gross! Why him?"

Siri fumed. "Why, you little-!" reaching out to grab him, only for Astrid's voice to suddenly pierce the air.

"LEIF HICCUP HADDOCK, YOU GET BACK INTO BED RIGHT NOW, OR I'LL KEEP YOU IN THIS HOUSE UNTIL YOU'RE SIRI'S AGE!"

What little colour Leif had in his cheeks suddenly drained away upon hearing this and he scampered back into the house quicker than Siri had ever seen the eight year old run, leaving the two teenagers howling with laughter in his wake.

"I think I might take off, Seer," Gerold laughed, making his way back towards the hill. "You've got enough craziness on your plate by the looks of it!"

"See you, then!" she called back, just as Hiccup and Astrid appeared at the door to see what Leif had been going on about.

"Where's Gerold rushing off too?" Astrid asked her, curiously. "He didn't have to go."

"He didn't want to add to the craziness," Siri explained, with a faint blush beginning to rise in her cheeks as she spoke, which didn't go unnoticed by her father, who frowned.

"Is there something you'd like to tell us, Seer?" Hiccup asked her, arms crossed in front of his chest. "I heard Leif go on about you going out with Gerold." His face paled as Siri blushed even further. "Oh, no."

"So it's true?" Astrid asked her daughter, eagerly. "Did Gerold ask you out?"

Siri grinned. "Just before," she confirmed, her face growing brighter by the second.

"No wonder you're redder than Hookfang," her mother grinned, wrapping an arm around her daughter's shoulders. "Tell me all about it, sweetie."

"W...what?" Hiccup spluttered, looking at his wife and daughter as if they'd both gone crazy. "You're just going to accept this? She's only 14!"

"We weren't much older, babe," Astrid reminded him with a smile, as Siri went to argue. Hearing this, she chuckled. "Besides, Gerold seems like a decent boy, what's wrong with it?"

"It's gross, that's what!" came Leif's revolted voice from upstairs as Hiccup opened and closed his mouth like a dumb founded fish. "What were you thinking, sis?!"

"I'm thinking I'm going to get you, little brother!" Siri yelled back, but there was amusement in her tone. "You're so in for it!"

"Crap," was all that was heard as Siri made her way over to the stairs.

"Wait!" her mother said quickly. "Aren't you going to tell us what happened with Gerold? Where did you go today?"

"I'll explain later!" was all they heard, before she took off into Leif's room, who gave out a yell at the sight of his sister

"Noâ€¦don't you dareâ€¦!\_Seer\_!"

Astrid snorted with laughter. "I'm not saving you!" she yelled towards her son's room, before turning to Hiccup with an amused smile, as he gave out a long sigh.

"You alright there, babe?" she asked him, giving him a light kiss on the cheek. "You look worried."

"Worried?" Hiccup asked her incredulously, his face looking so hilariously miserable that Astrid had to hide a laugh behind her hand. "I had to go through Hel and back to ask a girl out, and Gerold just asks my daughter out like that! He...he didn't even tame a dragon!"

"Hiccup," Astrid said gently, her voice shaking with laughter at the hysterics her husband was in. "Let it go, babe. Just let it go."

\* \* \*

><p><em>No, that was not a Frozen reference! :p People said 'let it go' before that movie, you know! Of course, I understand if people thought that straight away lol.<em>



\_Also, please don't hate me! :p I know a lot of people are not going to be happy with the idea with Siri and Gerold, but please read this first. Siri is only 14 years old and despite Hiccup and Astrid only ever being with each other and no one else (that we know of), I don't know about any of you, but I don't know many people who go out with just one person their whole lives. Siri is a headstrong, teenage girl and is experiencing love for the first time and like any teenager, she's going to learn and make mistakes and I can assure you if you keep reading, you'll all see that. Please don't worry and keep reading. I promise it'll be worth it. You don't know what I have planned!\_

\_Anyway, so Siri and Gerold are going out and everything seems fine. I tried to make things as awkward and sweet as possible considering their ages, as well as showcase more of Gerold's personality. If some of you don't like Gerold, don't worry. It was kind of intentional. And yes, Lennart\_\_\*\* is\*\*\_\_ a little bit jealous, but he isn't the type that would get in the way of Siri's happiness, so no, he won't fight for her, but he will be protective since he doesn't trust him, plus he's not sure of his own feelings at this stage either. Also, yes, Anna and Snotlout did finally have a baby girl! (Full name: Rona Anna Jorgenson) And believe me I intend to have fun with Snotlout's overprotectiveness in later chapters. Also, yeah, throat fever was supposed to be strep throat, but I think I may have mutated it, so think of it somewhere cross between that and flu instead lol. \_

\_Ok, so next chapter is going to take place six months after this chapter and takes place during a day called Appreciation Day. And things are going to start building up to a multi chapter storyline with Siri which is going to get interesting! \_\_\*\*With Siri's favorite day of the year coming up, Appreciation Day, in which children show their appreciation and love for their parents, she begins to work with her siblings to make this a special day for all. But when Siri begins hanging out with Gerold and his group, she begins to become reckless and influenced, neglecting her sibling's needs, things start to become tense in the Haddock household. \*\*\_\_That's a basic summary, but one things for sure, things are going to start heating up and come to a head within the next few chapters, and Siri is going to go through a learning curve of being a teenager. I'm so looking forward to this!\_

\_Anyway, \_\_\*\*DON'T FORGET TO REVIEW! \*\*\_\_Just remember\_\_\*\* NO FLAMES WILL BE TOLERATED, \*\*\_\_but\_\_\*\* KIND \*\*\_\_constructive criticism is accepted.\_\_

## 42. Chapter 42: Broken Promises

\_Hi guys, long time no see! I'm SO sorry it's been almost 6 months since my last update, and for that I highly apologise! When I started this chapter last year, I was really into my favourite show, Once Upon A Time, and just had no motivation for this story after writing it for so long and I was fairly burnt out. Eventually I decided to take a break, and get my writing groove back, as well as writing a Once Upon A Time fanfic to try something new. Now that I have had a break, I am now ready to update this as regularly as I can again :)\_

\_Ok, so this chapter takes place 6 months after Gerold asked Siri

out, so Siri is now 14 and a half, Leif is a few months off turning 9, and Ingrid has just turned 5. This was originally planned to be a Thawfest idea where Ingrid was taking part for the first time, but the story was going nowhere, and once I changed it, it came to me A LOT easier. It takes place on a day called \_\_\*\*Appreciation Day\*\*\_\_, a day which is pretty much mother's day and father's day put together where Leif and Ingrid come up with the best idea for the day, but Siri begins to get distracted elsewhere. Appreciation Day may be a made up holiday, but I quite liked the idea when I started to develop it!\_

\_So, this chapter is the beginning of a rebellious phase for Siri, as 14/15 is usually the age that teenagers start to act out and it's going to get very interesting. \_\_\*\*This story is a two parter, and was written at the same time, so both chapters will be posted within the next 24-48 hours of each other!\*\*\_\_

\_Anyway, on with the chapter!\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 42 â€" Broken Promises<span>

\* \* \*

><p><em>Whoosh!<em>

"Hey, do you mind?! You almost took my arm off!"

"Sorry, but you know I suck with a bow and arrow!"

"Gee, I didn't notice," Siri mumbled, twisting her arm around to check for any damage, and failing to see any, glanced up at her boyfriend with narrowed eyes. "Why are you even using that thing anyway?" she asked him, suspiciously, as he placed another arrow into the quiver. "You're a swordsman, not an archer."

"Because Sorsi wants to do a weapons show for Takknemlighet day, that's why," Gerold answered with a sigh. "And she wants us to use\_ all\_ weapons."

"What's wrong with calling it Appreciation day?" Siri asked, face screwed up in annoyance, as Gerold reloaded the bow beside her. "The traditional name is bloody awful...oi!" she screeched, as another arrow suddenly whizzed past her head. "You're going to kill someone with that aim, you idiot!" Feeling like her heart was about to beat out of her chest, Siri looked over at the arrow, now stuck in the academy's' wall behind her, before shaking her head. "Seriously, Gerold, do you even\_ aim\_ before you let those things lose?!"

"How are you even \_supposed\_ to aim these things?" Gerold asked her, forehead creasing with a frown as he replaced the arrow. "It's not like you have control over the dumb piece of crap."

"It's \_not\_ a piece of crap," Siri said indignantly, strolling over to where Gerold was standing, before taking a glance at his position with narrowed eyes. "You just have no aim."

"Oh, and you do?" Gerold grinned, to which to the fourteen year old promptly rolled her eyes, before reaching out her hands to steady his

bow.

"Well, I have a better aim than you, that's for sure," Siri replied, positioning her hands on the boy's arms. "You just pull your arm back without thinking. But if you do this," she placed his arm in a better position to aim, "you have a better chance to actually hit the target, not just hoping it doesn't hit anyone else."

"How?" Gerold asked, brows knitted in confusion as he turned towards her. "This bow has a mind of its own."

"Well, for one thing, don't just pull it back and hope for the best," Siri sighed, watching as Gerold quickly pulled back on the bow. Placing a gentle hand on his arm, she carefully manoeuvred his hand towards his chin. "You should always have your hand under your chin as an anchor, and make sure the string touches your lips-"

"Your lips, huh?" Gerold asked, his eyebrow raised in amusement.

"Well, yeah, so you can better see the...oh, ha, ha, very funny!" Siri growled in exasperation as Gerold suddenly sniggered beside her. Throwing him an annoyed look, the fourteen year old quickly dropped her boyfriend's arm. "I should have known you didn't really suck at using a bow and arrow."

"Oh, I wasn't lying about that," Gerold assured her, with a mischievous grin. "I couldn't hit a dragon if it flew right in front of me."

Siri raised a brow. "So, you decided to use it as a flirting session because-?"

"I wanted to see how long it took you to figure it out," Gerold grinned.

"Yeah, ha, ha, I'm very amused," Siri said dryly, with a roll of her eyes. "My boyfriend's a comedian."

Gerold chuckled. "Sorry, Seer, I couldn't resist," he grinned. "But honestly, I don't think there's anything you can do for me anyway. I've never seemed to have the aim, even as a kid."

"Yeah, no kidding," Siri mumbled, eyeing off the arrow that was still stuck in the wall behind her. "Why does Sorsi want you to use all weapons anyway?" she inquired, turning back to him. "Surely it'd be safer to just use the weapons you can use?"

"You'd think that, yeah," Gerold said, as he placed the bow and arrow down on the ground. "But Sorsi thought it'd be a cool idea to show our parents just how skilled," he made quotation marks in the air, "we are in all types of weaponry thanks to their teaching. Which would be a lot cooler, if I could actually use them all," he admitted thoughtfully.

"Well, nobody's perfect," Siri pointed out with a smile, her earlier annoyance forgotten, as she sat beside him. "I can easily hit a target with most weapons, but ask me to use a spear and it'll most likely end up in you, not the target."

"Glad I'm not the only one," Gerold chuckled. "So, speaking of T...Appreciation day," he quickly amended, noticing Siri's annoyed expression. "What are you guys planning?"

Siri smiled. "Actually, I don't know," she admitted. "Ingrid and Leif won't let me suggest anything because \_they\_ \_want\_ to be the ones to come up with something this year."

"It's Ingrid first year joining in, isn't it?" Gerold asked, causing Siri to nod in response. "She must be pretty excited, then."

"Excited?" Siri laughed. "She's \_ecstatic\_. \_It's\_ all she's been able to talk about for weeks. She's determined to make it really special this year. Well," she added, throwing a grin in Gerold's direction, "as special as a five year old can make it anyway."

"You think a five year old can't do something awesome?" Gerold asked her, one eyebrow raised in amusement. "Well, \_somebody\_ doesn't remember what she did for \_her\_ first appreciation day, then."

"Hey, in my defence, I hadn't been training Midnight for very long," Siri said quickly, as she felt the blood beginning to rush to her cheeks. "How was I supposed to know a whole herd of Terrible Terrors wouldn't listen to me?"

"And who knew a Terrible Terror circus would go down in flames \_so\_ badly?" Gerold replied, mockingly, causing Siri to duck her head in embarrassment. "It was the one memory from that age I \_actually\_ still remember."

"Nice to know," Siri groaned, as she placed her head in her hands, mortified. "I \_had\_ managed to get that memory out of my head."

Gerold snickered. "I can't believe Lennart never teased you about it."

"Len wasn't there," Siri pointed out, lifting her head to meet Gerold's eyes once again. "He wasn't old enough to participate yet."

"Soâ€|he doesn't know?" A mischievous grin twitched at the boys lips.

"No, and he's never going to find out!" Siri exclaimed wildly, as Gerold howled with laughter beside her. "If you tell him, I'll-

"Relax, Seer," Gerold reassured her gently, as he shifted closer towards her. "I'm just kidding. I won't tell." Placing a shy arm around her shoulders, he gave her a small smile, which she returned. "Besides, you were only five. You wanted to make the day special for your parents."

"I still do," she said softly, a tender expression crossing her eyes. "Next to Snoggletog, this is still one of my favourite days of the year. We don't get many chances to show our parents we care at our age. Hormones seem to take care of that," she added, throwing at grin towards Gerold, who gave a snort of amusement.

"And \_that\_," he replied, "is why Sorsi is trying so hard this year. She's got in more trouble than she can count lately. Although to be honest," he said, with a slight frown in Siri's direction. "I think the whole idea is stupid by our age. It should just be for the kids, I think."

"But we\_ are \_still kids," Siri insisted, as a frown crossed her face. "And we shouldn't have to stop doing it just because our hormones tell us otherwise."

Gerold shrugged. "I guess."

"Siri!" Ingrid's voice suddenly called, effectively cutting off any further conversation on the matter. "Siri, Leifey and I wanna start planning!"

"Do you now?" With a slight frown at Gerold, Siri quickly turned her attention to the five year old with a wide smile. "So, does that mean you and Leif have something figured out?"

"Yep!" Leif grinned. "And it is \_awesome\_!"

Siri raised her eyebrows in interest, despite the slight annoyance gnawing at her stomach from the interruption. "Well, I guess I better come and find out what this awesome plan is," she said. She turned back to Gerold. "I'll meet you tomorrow, alright?"

"Sure thing," Gerold said, groaning as he stood up from the hard floor. "I guess I better go and help Sorsi with our plans, too." He kissed her cheek. "See you tomorrow."

Siri blushed. "See you later," she said.

"Do you two seriously have to do that in front of me?" Leif asked her, face screwed up in disgust, as they began to walk out. "It's gross!"

"It's no worse than mum and dad," Siri pointed out dryly, ignoring the eight year olds revolted expression "Now," she said, with a smile down at her little sister, who was happily gripping her hand. "What's this awesome plan of yours?"

\* \* \*

><p>"A scavenger hunt?" Siri said in surprise. "You mean like that Snoggletog hunt dad put on that time?"<p>

Ingrid frowned, her face contorted with confusion. "What Snoggletog hunt?" she asked.

"She means the one daddy put on for us when we were little," Leif explained to his sister with a grin. "Mummy was still pregnant with you at the time."

"What was it?" Ingrid asked, emerald eyes lighting up in curiosity.

"Daddy came up with an idea for a present hunt for Snoggletog to keep us from going holiday crazy," Siri chuckled, remembering the one off

event well. "We had to find us many presents as we could in order to beat the other teams."

Ingrid frowned. "Why don't we still play it?"

Siri and Leif snorted. "Because it became too competitive and daddy never did it again," Siri told the five year old with a grin. "But it was the most fun we'd ever had."

"I'll say," Leif said, with a sigh. "I was only three, and I still remember how awesome it was."

"Maybe we can get dad interested again by doing this," Leif said, nodding his head to the written plans in front of them. "What do you think, Seer?"

"I think it's a great idea," Siri said cheerfully, as she picked up the messy plans Leif had placed in front of her. "But-" she frowned at the scribbles that was Leif's writing, "-what exactly would they be doing? Your writing is as bad as dad's."

"Yeah, I know," Leif said, grinning sheepishly, as he got up to take a glance at the plans. "But all we'd be doing is hiding notes all around Berk for mummy and daddy to find-"

"-Until they find their present," Ingrid piped up elatedly, her eyes lighting up at the prospect.

"Yeah, that's pretty much it," Leif chuckled, as he smiled down at the little girl. "These," he gestured a hand to the plans in Siri's hand, "are just where we might hide the notes."

"I thought it looked like a map," Siri admitted, looking back down at the page. "But don't worry, we'll figure it out. What about the notes, though?" she asked. "Do you want them to be hard?"

"Not really," Leif said, scratching at the back of his neck in a carbon copy gesture of his father. "We just don't want them to find their present so easy."

Siri nodded. "And is Gobber still making the present?"

Leif grinned. "Yep. And then we'll hide it somewhere real good when he finishes it."

"Awesome!" Siri beamed proudly at her two siblings. "This is going to be the best Appreciation Day ever. Considering we usually do the same thing every year. Who even came up with this?"

"I did," Leif and Ingrid said in unison. They threw each other a glare.

"I'm the one who said we should hide the present," Leif said, annoyed, glaring down at his younger sibling.

"I come up with the pressie hunt, Leifey!" Ingrid retorted back, her face contorting into a frown.

"You-" Leif quickly close his mouth with a sigh. "Actually she's right," he admitted, emitting a long sigh, as he glanced at his big

sister. "She did come up with it. It was just embarrassing that I was beaten by a five year old." He chuckled.

"Don't worry, she's been beating us since she could talk," Siri said, smiling down at the five year old. "She's the brains of this family, aren't you, Ingrid?"

Ingrid erupted into a fit of giggles. "No, I'm not!"

"Wait," Siri suddenly interrupted, stopping Ingrid's giggles on their tracks. "I hear someone." Her eyes widened. "Mum and dad are coming! Quick," she continued, with a glance towards her brother, "hide your plans!"

"Where?" the eight year old cried frantically, wildly looking around the room. "There's nowhere to hide anything down here!"

"Anywhere will do!" his sister hissed, causing Leif to hurriedly stuff the paper down his shirt just as the front door opened to reveal Hiccup and Astrid, who upon seeing their three children loitering awkwardly in the doorway, instantly raised their eyebrows in question.

"What are you three up too?" Hiccup asked them, a wide grin spreading across his face as he took in the kid's innocent expressions. "You're not planning for Appreciation Day now, are you?"

"No."

"Yes."

"Maybe."

Siri threw the two younger Haddocks a narrowed glance. "So much for subtle," she hissed at them, causing them to grin sheepishly at the older girl.

Hiccup chuckled lightly. "Seer, you've never been able to keep Appreciation day a secret," Hiccup pointed out, grinning. "I don't think this year will be any different."

"Well, not this year, dad!" Siri exclaimed, effortlessly avoiding her father's expectant expression. "Leif and Ingrid are planning things this year, and they aren't giving it away." She turned to the two children, eyebrows raised. "Are you?"

"Nope," Leif said, crossing his arms in front of his chest, where he gently bumped the plans hidden down his tunic. "You'll have to wait like everyone else this year, dad."

"Yep," Ingrid chimed in, an innocent expression crossing her pretty face. "No cheating!"

"Looks like they have you this year, babe," Astrid said, throwing her husband a wide grin. "We might actually be surprised for once."

Hiccup glanced at Astrid with raised brows. "In all the time you've known me, milady, have I ever not tried to find out what our kids

are planning?" and not waiting for Astrid to reply, he quickly launched himself towards the three children, causing them to scatter in different directions, emitting squeals of delight.

"I sometimes wonder who the real child is around here," Astrid chuckled, watching as her husband suddenly caught up with their youngest daughter, who emitted a high pitch scream as she was suddenly scooped up into her father's arms, before being tickled vigorously in the ribs.

"No! Daddy...Daddy... Don't tickle me!" Ingrid squealed, as her father's attack grew stronger. "I NOT TELL YOU!" She frantically turned to her sister. "SIRI!"

"Give up, dad, Ingrid's immune to your tickle attacks," Siri grinned, causing Hiccup to let up on the assault. "It's just going to have to be one year that you'll actually have to be surprised."

Hiccup sighed. "Fine, you win," he conceded, as he gently placed Ingrid back on the ground, before throwing the three kids a wide smile. "Looks like I'll actually have to wait this year."

"Thank Thor for that," Astrid said, relieved, as she wrapped a tender arm around her husband's shoulders. "Unlike you, sweetie, I'd actually like to be surprised for once."

"But...but it's tradition for the parents to find out beforehand!" Hiccup stammered, unconvincingly.

Astrid snorted. "That might be how it is in the Haddock household," she said, with an amused grin, "but everyone else has always had to wait until it's actually Appreciation Day. Which is how it should be," she added quickly, seeing that Hiccup was about to retort. He pouted.

"Where's the fun in that?"

"There's a lot of fun if you actually gave it a chance," Astrid pointed out, biting her lip to stop herself from laughing. "Sorry, babe."

"Yeah, sorry dad," Siri said cheerfully, as she stood on tip toes to kiss her father's cheek. "But I assure you that this idea is the best we've ever come up with. If you'd actually let us plan, that is."

Hiccup chuckled. "Alright," he said, "I take the hint," He threw his hands up in defeat. "I'll leave you three to it."

"Don't worry, I'll make sure he doesn't eavesdrop," Astrid assured her with a grin, as Hiccup made his way up the stairs. "Just make sure you all help each other, though. Don't make Leif and Ingrid do everything just because it's their idea."

"When have I ever done that?" Siri asked, scandalised.

Astrid smiled. "Never," she admitted. "I just know how this day gets for kids your age; especially Gerold." She threw her daughter a knowing glance. "I overheard him complaining about it on the way home."



Siri grinned sheepishly. "Yeah..." she said slowly, reaching up to play with her hair. "I know. He seems to think we're too old for the day. But I know he's wrong," she added quickly, seeing her parents uneasy expressions. "He's just being a typical boy."

"Yeah, well, don't let Gerold influence you on the matter," her father said sternly, as he crossed his arms in front of his chest. "Just because he doesn't want to celebrate, doesn't mean you shouldn't."

Siri rolled her eyes. "You don't have to worry about me, dad," the fourteen year old assured her father with a soft smile. "I'm not going to let Gerold's stupid ideas influence me. Now," she continued, with a grin forming on her lips, "get out of here!" she added, with a wave of her hands. "

Astrid laughed. "Alright, we're going!" she said quickly, nudging her begrudged husband towards their room in the process, before shutting the door behind the three kids.

As soon as the door clicked shut behind the two parents, a sigh of unison rang out from the three Haddock kids.

"I thought for sure dad was going to find out," Siri said, holding out her hand to Leif for the plans, who quickly dug down into his shirt, before producing them to his sister. "I thought Ingrid was gonna crack."

"I nearly did," the five year old admitted, as she held her sides. "Daddy is a real good tickler."

Siri chuckled. "How do you think he got the answer out of me for the past decade?" She glanced up to the closed door that was her parent's room, before glancing back to her siblings. "What do you say we get started on this tomorrow?" she suggested, keeping one wary eye on her parents room. "I don't know about you two, but I don't trust dad not to eavesdrop; no matter what he promised."

\* \* \*

><p>"What about somewhere else in the village?"<p>

"We already have three notes hidden here. It won't be much of a treasure hunt if they're all stuck in the same place."

Continuing along the path, Leif groaned. "Whose idea was this again?"

"Yours," Siri answered absent-mindedly, as she swept her eyes around the crowded town square. "Don't try and pin this on me, little brother."

"Actually it was Ingrid's," Leif pointed out, trudging along behind the teenager. "But now I wish I hadn't listened to her."

"Hey!" the five year old exclaimed, indignantly, stopping along the path to glare at her older brother. "You said it sounded fun, Leifey!"

"I didn't know it would be so much work, though," the eight year old muttered, despite the glare the little girl was giving him.

"Ignore him, Ingrid," Siri chuckled, throwing the little girl a grin. "He's just mad he can't stay upright enough to hide the notes."

"I can too!" Leif retorted, only to trip over a large branch in his path, causing the young boy to go sprawling in the dirt. "Urgh," he groaned, face flat on the ground, "I hate this."

"You're hopeless," Siri laughed, holding out her hand for him to take. "I sometimes wonder how you've managed to get this far."

"I do, too," Leif replied, hauling himself up off the ground in a huff. "I seem to trip over anything in my way."

"Like daddy!" Ingrid giggled, causing Leif to scowl down at her.

"Thanks a lot, Ingrid," Leif murmured. "Maybe I should leave the planning to you and Siri."

"Oh, no, you're not," Siri said quickly, placing her hands on her hips in annoyance, as Ingrid giggled beside her. "\_You\_ came up with this idea, you're helping. Besides," she continued, with a look down at Ingrid. "Ingrid was only kidding, weren't you?" she asked the five year old, whose face grew serious in an instant.

"I was only kidding, Leifey," Ingrid confirmed, looking up at her brother with a gentle smile. "I didn't mean to annoy you."

The innocent expression on his sister's face made the eight year old chuckle. "How can anyone stay mad at that face?" he asked, chuckling. "Alright, why don't you pick a hiding spot for a note then, Ingrid?"

Eyes lighting up, Ingrid instantly swung her head around the village, teeth chewing on her bottom lip in thought. "What about the stables?" the girl suggested shyly, turning her attention back to her older siblings. "Mummy and daddy are always there." Her eyes widened in thought. "We could hide a note in Stormfly's saddle bag!" she exclaimed excitedly.

"We could \_hide\_ a note there, not hides," Siri corrected her gently. "But you're right. We could hide a note in the stables." She glanced down at the map in the hand. "So, that's six notes all up, including the ones we'll hide at home. Six more to go." Sticking her tongue out in thought, the teenager glanced around the village once more.

"What about if we hide a note in each of their friend's houses?" she suggested slowly, locking her eyes on Snotlout and Anna's house nearby, where Lennart and his three siblings were milling around on the front steps. "We could ask them to hide them, I guess."

"Ask us to hide what?" Siri started slightly as she saw Lennart approaching them from the house; a bewildered expression upon his young face. "What are you guys even doing?"

"Appreciation Day plans," Siri explained, holding up the paper for the boy to see. "We're doing a treasure hunt where mum and dad have

to find hidden notes around the village in order to find their present."

Lennart's eyes lit up in enthusiasm. "That's an \_awesome\_ idea!" he exclaimed, with a grin towards Siri. "Where in Thor's name did you come up with \_that\_?"

Siri grinned "I didn't," she admitted. "This was all Leif and Ingrid's idea." She threw the two kids a wide smile. "All I have to do is help with the planning this year."

"Well, I think it's awesome!" Lennart said, throwing the two younger Haddocks a grin, before turning to Siri. "Is that what you to ask my parents about?" he asked. "Do you want to hide a note at our place?"

"Do you think it would be alright?" Siri asked him, flicking her eyes over towards the couple.

"I'll ask them," Lennart said, as he followed Siri's glance towards the house. "But I don't think they'll mind. It's a great idea. It's definitely better than what \_my\_ brothers have planned anyway," he sighed, glancing at the two boys with narrowed eyes.

"Why? What do they have planned?" Siri asked him, amused.

"A mini thawfest," Lennart replied dryly, with a roll of his cobalt eyes. "All \_they\_ want to do is show off in front of mum and dad how 'great'" - he made lazy quotation marks in the air - "they are." The teenager placed a hand over his face with a groan. "Honestly, those two are going to be as bad as dad before long. Well, Sigmund is," he added in afterthought, glancing back towards his brothers. "Bjorn isn't \_too\_ bad yet."

Chuckling sympathetically, Siri gave the fourteen year old a pat on the shoulder, resulting in a small smile to twitch at his corner of his lips. "With your dad's genes, I'm sorry to say it was inevitable, Len," she said gravely. "You'll just be stuck with two mini Snotlouts for the rest of your life."

"Whose side are you on, Seer?" Lennart demanded, a look of horror crossing his young face. "Can you imagine living with three Snotlouts?" His eyes widened in dismay. "Oh Thor, poor mum."

Siri laughed. "Sorry, Len, but it was obvious since they were little that they took after him," she told him gently. "But I think you might be safe with Rona. Even for a one year old she seems really sweet."

Lennart nodded, as he looked over at his sister, clutching the wooden post of the house for support as she stood. "Thank Thor for that," he murmured, as Siri suddenly glanced down at her map once again.

"Well," Siri said quickly, her eyes on the paper. "I'll let you ask your parents about joining in. I better ask Ruffnut and Annika if they're okay with having a note in their place too. I'd ask Gerold, but it'd be a waste of time," she added absently, causing Lennart to frown in her direction.

"Please don't tell me it's been \_Gerold\_ complaining that we're too old for this?" Lennart asked her, his tone disapproving. "Seriously, Seer, please don't say you agree with him? It's not like it's embarrassing."

"Well, it sort of is," Siri admitted; grinning sheepishly at the irritated look Lennart was throwing her way. "But you and I both know that today has always been one of my favourite holidays, so it's not like I'm going to suddenly agree with him..."

"Yeah, well, let it stay that way too," Lennart said, as a frown crossed his face. "I mean, I like the guy. Sort of," he added in a quiet mutter that Siri didn't catch. "But he can be a real idiot. I mean, you don't need to agree with Gerold on everything."

"I don't," Siri assured him with a resounding snort. "Don't worry about that. I know what he's like."

"But..." Lennart started.

"Hey, Seer!"

"Speaking of Loki," Lennart muttered dryly, turning his head just in time to see Gerold strolling over to them with a small smile on his face.

"What are you doing here?" Siri asked him, brightly, as the fifteen year old gave her a shy kiss on the cheek. "I thought you were supposed to be helping Sorsi?"

"I left her to it," he explained. "It was getting boring, so I met up with the others. Do you want to join us, Seer?" he asked the fourteen year old, who quickly glanced at Leif with an uncertain expression.

"I've had enough too," the eight year old said; the boredom evident on his face as he sat on the ground. "Can we finish it later?"

"If that's what you want," she agreed; a smile lighting up her face. She turned to Lennart. "I'll see you later, Len."

"Yeah, sure," he said, with a glance at Gerold. "I need to see if I can get out of my brothers idea, anyway." He turned back to Siri with a soft smile, before heading back towards the house where his brothers could be heard arguing over the idea at the top of the voices.

"I'll meet you guys at the Great Hall at about 4 o'clock, is that alright?" Siri said, as she turned back to her siblings, just as they were ready to head back home. "We can finish the plans, then."

"Okay," Leif agreed, as he held out his hand for the map, which Siri instantly handed over to him. "We'll see you then." He held out a hand for Ingrid. "Come on, Ingrid."

"Alright, see you then," Siri confirmed, as they headed back towards the house, before she turned her attention back to the boy beside her. "So," she said, "what are we doing?"

\* \* \*

><p>"You're going to do <em>what<em>?!"

"Set off all the fire protection systems-" Gerold began.

"\_While\_ also unbolting all the seats around the village," Oleg, a friend of Gerold's, added with a mischievous grin.

Siri glanced at them, dumbfounded. "And, why are you doing this?"

"Why \_shouldn't\_ we do this?" Iver, another friend in Gerold's circle of friends, said. He chuckled at Siri's incredulous expression. "Oh come on, Seer, you can't tell me you've never wanted to see what would happen if we set those things off?"

"Well...yes," Siri admitted sheepishly, casting a glance toward one of the water towers in question. "But what have the seats got to do with anything?"

"We're going to loosen the bolts on the seats, so when the fire systems go off, any Viking that's on them will come flying off!" Iver explained readily. "If we're going to scare everyone, we might as well do it properly," the boy added with a chuckle.

"But-" Siri started, looking towards Gerold, "-\_why\_ are we going this? Shouldn't we be planning Appreciation Day instead of doing stupid pranks?"

"I'd rather be doing stupid pranks than having to do \_that\_," Iver said dryly, as the group of five boys, and one girl, groaned in unison. "Honestly, Seer, are you \_still\_ into that dumb day? We're getting too old for it."

Siri frowned. "You're only fifteen," she pointed out. "And the last time I checked you still live with your parents," she added smugly, as the boy went to open his mouth to retort. "So why are you too old for it again?"

"Oh, come on, Siri, don't be like that," Brenna, the lone girl in the group, said. "We don't have anything against our parents. It's just this day should be kept more for the younger kids, that's all. It's just embarrassing to have to join in with these silly traditions at our age."

"Seriously, Seer, don't you feel a bit embarrassed having to do this in front of everyone?" Hakon, another boy, asked. "Because I do."

"Not...really," Siri admitted, her face burning bright red as five sets of eyes turned towards her. "I think it's a really nice day. I mean, I was helping my own brother and sister with it just before..."

"Well, I guess some of us grow up quicker than others," Brenna mumbled scornfully, causing the rest of the group to snort into their hands.

"Alright, that's enough, Brenna," Gerold cut in, as Siri's azure eyes

flashed dangerously towards the girl. "Siri is still entitled to like the day, even if you find it embarrassing. And of course you would," he added, with a wink towards Siri, "considering your little sister dumped you in a dragon food tray last year."

Brenna flushed brightly. "Yeah, well, it's little wonder," she mumbled, dropping the earlier subject.

"Guys, are we going to do this or not?" Iver cut in, crossing his arms across his chest in impatience. "Because if we want the full effect, we're going to have to do it before the sun goes down."

"I'm in," Gerold grinned, before he turned to his girlfriend, still milling uncertainly at his side. "What do you, Siri? Going to join in the fun?"

"I don't know," Siri admitted, nervously, as she looked around the crowded village. "Won't we get in trouble?"

"Not if they don't catch us," Gerold said, unfazed by the notion. "Oh come, Seer, it's just one little prank," he added, seeing his girlfriend's hesitant expression. "But if you want to go and help Leif and Ingrid with Appreciation Day, it's alright. I just thought the heir of Berk would get sick of being the good girl all the time, that's all."

"I am not always a good girl!" Siri refuted irritably, glancing around at the others. "Fine, I'll do it," she said, with a quick glance at Gerold. "Just make sure we're done by four so I can meet Leif and Ingrid."

"You'll get there," Gerold said dismissively, waving a hand at the comment. "Now," he continued, with a grin toward the rest of the group. "Who wants to do what?" He turned to Siri. "Do you want to help me dismantle the fire protection?" he asked her with a grin. "I mean, you do know how they work, don't you?"

Despite the anxiety gnawing at her stomach, Siri couldn't help but throw a grin in his direction. "That I do," she confirmed. "Believe it or not, dad's showed me. So I know exactly what to do."

\* \* \*

><p>"I've gotta hand it to you, Seer. You knew more about these things than I did."<p>

"You're lucky I was here," Siri said, as she dumped more water into the cauldron. "If I wasn't, you would have stuffed the whole thing up."

"I'll say," Gerold murmured, as he glanced down at the ropes below him. "I never knew your dad had upgraded them. I thought we had to pull the ropes ourselves."

"Well, you still can," Siri pointed out, as she tugged lightly on the rope in demonstration. "But dad thought it would be better if the rope snapped from the heat of the fire. That way it still works even if no one's here to pull it. But I think it'd be better if we just set them all off from a distance. Its funnier that way," she grinned,

as she glanced back up to her boyfriend, who returned the grin.

"You are so awesome," Gerold said, giving her a quick peck on the cheek, turning her face bright red. "Who knew you had this in you?" He glanced towards the ground. "Come on," he said quickly, seeing there was no one around. "We better go and see if the other guys need help."

Giving a quick nod, Siri cautiously jumped down from the protection tower, with Gerold right behind her, before moving to rush off to the rest of the group. Before they even moved a foot, though, they came to them.

"All done?" Gerold asked.

"All chairs lose and wobbly," Brenna confirmed, with a mischievous grin. She presented a basket. "No one will be staying upright on those things for a while." She glanced up at the water tower in front of them. "All ready here?"

"Ready," Gerold said, as he glanced around the area. "We just need a dragon to set them off."

"I'll do it," Siri grinned, having felt uneasy about the whole thing earlier, had lost her inhibitions. Turning towards the stables, she gave a loud whistle, which in turn quickly presented a very eager Night Star to her side. But before the fourteen year old could say anything else, though, the Nadder took one look at Gerold and his group, snorted in annoyance and took off as quickly as she'd came.

"So much for being my \_loyal\_ dragon!"

"And the dragon's gone as fast as you can say, Gerold," Hakon snorted, as he turned towards the boy in question. "Does she \_still\_ not like you, Gerold?"

"Nope," Gerold said, with furrowed brows as he watched the dragon fly off. "It's like she only likes certain people. And I'm not one of them."

"I have no idea why," Siri said in annoyance, turning her attention back to the group. "But whatever it is, she's being a stubborn arse."

Gerold chuckled. "I don't mind," he said gently, before he turned and whistled towards the direction of the stables. "I think Niddhog would be more willing to do this anyway."

Before Gerold could even finish a sentence, the Monstrous Nightmare had shown up in front of the group, eyeing them all off as he waited for his friend's command. Seeing this, Gerold pointed to the fire protection towers cautiously, before mimicking a fire blast. Seeing this, the dragon's eyes widened enthusiastically, causing Gerold to hurriedly turn to the group.

"Let's go," he said quickly, causing the group to scatter in the direction of the stables, where they stood just inside the doors, peeking out.

"Ready," Gerold said, holding up a hand for the dragon to see. "Set..." He stopped quickly. "Does anyone have the horn?" he asked.

"Me," Hakon said, producing it from its hiding spot for all to see. Gerold nodded.

"Ok, then. Ready...set...NOW!"

Hakon took a deep breath and with a slight pause, pursed his lips to the horn held between both hands and let forth a blare that would roused the dead from their graves; at the same time, Nidhog released a gout of flame that severed the ropes on the nearest protection tower, and all was quiet for a second as the ropes singed and sizzled, before flames leapt along the lengths of the ropes to adjoining towers, igniting more and more ropes in a blaze. Scant villagers had caught sight of the nefarious act, and dismissing the horn blow, went around their normal daily lives - until, with a SNAP SNAP SNAP, the ropes burnt through and began dumping a collective flood of water onto \_everything.\_ The Vikings who were not knocked off their feet by the water itself soon landed rump first from their sudden reactions making the various furniture pieces they were seated upon collapse under them, deprived of their nails, and now, some of the Vikings' meagre modesty. It was an utter cacophony in the village with Vikings tripping, spiralling and falling over backwards into everyone - and everything - around them.

"\_This,\_" Siri laughed, "is the \_best\_ idea you could have \_ever\_ come up with!" Doubling over, Siri had to clutch her stomach as a roar of laughter burst from her throat as she watched one Viking crash into another, before falling over an upturned seat behind him.

"I told you!" Hakon grinned, pointing down at the chaos that was the village. "Look at them!" he laughed, watching as another Viking stumbled around, soaked through his clothes. "They don't know what's hit them!"

"Well, some of them do," Brenna quipped, her shoulders shaking with laughter as she eyed off a group of drenched Vikings. "They look like they've been caught in a rainstorm!"

"And they don't look too happy about it either," Siri noted, squinting down towards the village at the crowd of angry Vikings. Biting her lip, she quickly turned to the others. "Do you think we should get out of here?" she asked them, nervously. "I don't think they'll be very happy if they find out it was us."

"Why?" Gerold asked, perplexed, as he glanced down towards the village. "How are they going to find out it was-"

"WHO DID THIS?!" came Spitelout's irate roar, instantly cutting off the rest of Gerold's sentence. "WHO'S THE IDIOT THAT DID \_THIS\_?!"

"On second thought," Gerold began, his face instantly paling, "I think it's time to go." He turned to the others, all with identical expressions of nervousness etched onto their faces. "Scatter!"

The three boys, and Brenna, instantly headed for the stable door, and



with a quick glance towards the village to see if the coast was clear, they quickly raced off in different directions before a search party was formed.

Gerold quickly glanced at Siri. "See you tomorrow morning?" he asked her hopefully.

"Sure," Siri said, throwing him a wide smile. "This was awesome. But I better go and meet...Leif...and Ingrid." She trailed off as she noted the sun's position in the sky, before her eyes widened in realisation. "Oh shit!" she exclaimed. "I was supposed to meet Leif and Ingrid over an hour ago! I'll see you later," she added quickly, pressing a swift kiss on her boyfriend's cheek, before rushing off towards the Great Hall as fast as her legs could carry her.

Bounding up the hundreds of stairs that led to the Great Hall, Siri had the breath knocked out of her by the time she reached the top. Doubled over breathlessly, with a stitch in her side, the teenager took a few moments to regain her breath, before shoving open the massive doors, and racing inside; sweeping her eyes over the milling crowd of Vikings as she did so.

"Looking for Leif and Ingrid, Seer?" Gobber asked as he approached the fourteen year old, mug of ale in hand. He gestured towards the back of the hall with a hook. "Been sitting back there for ages," he told her, with a slight frown. "Not sure what they're doing."

"Thanks, Gobber," Siri replied absently, as she made her way over towards her brother and sister, who upon spotting her, threw her a disgruntled look, before glancing back away.

Siri sighed. "Guys, I know I'm late. But I promise I didn't mean to be. I just...lost track of time, I guess."

"Lost track of time pulling a prank on the whole village," Leif mumbled, throwing his sister a knowing glance.

Surprised, Siri's eyes widened. "How did you know that was me?" she asked him, quietly, as she slipped into a seat beside him. "I mean, we weren't caught."

"Seer, I saw a couple of Gerold's friends unbolting the seats a few hours ago," Leif said, with a roll of his eyes. "And since Gerold was taking you to meet up with those guys, it had to have been you."

"Please don't tell mum and dad, Leif," Siri begged, glancing around to see if anyone was eavesdropping. "They'll kill me if they find out it was me."

"Oh, I don't know, Seer," Leif said, as an impish smile formed on his lips. "It might be too good to pass up."

"You little-"

Leif chuckled. "Seer, I'm kidding," the eight year old grinned, making her sigh in relief. "But thanks to you, we're now behind on the treasure hunt notes, and it's in two days. We're going to have

to work on it all day tomorrow if we're going to get this done on time."

Siri sighed. "I know," she said, sheepishly. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to blow you two off."

"I figured," Leif said, with a sigh of his own. "And I forgive you, I guess. I mean it was a pretty cool prank," he grinned. "You should have seen how wet some of them were."

"I can guess," Siri grinned, looking around the crowded hall, where some of the affected Vikings were milling around the area; their clothes still sopping.

"Siri," Leif began, causing the girl to glance back towards her brother, "I promise not to tell mum and dad about what you did, if you keep your promise and help Ingrid and me tomorrow. Promise?"

"I promise," the girl replied, sincerely, throwing him a warm smile. "Appreciation Day will be my number one priority. Do you forgive me?"

"I forgive you," Leif said. "But I'm not sure about Ingrid." He glanced over to the five year old. "What do you say, Ingrid?"

Ingrid glanced up at her sister with a smile. "I forgive you," the little girl beamed. "It was a accident."

Siri chuckled. "Thanks, Ingrid," she smiled. "Now," she added, with a quick towards the open doors, where the sun was beginning to sink lower in the sky, "we better get home before dad wonders where we are. We'll get this finished tomorrow."

\* \* \*

><p>"So much for getting this done," Siri sighed, as she flicked her eyes towards her parents; huddled over a pile of blueprints at Hiccup's desk. "They haven't moved all <em>morning<em>."

"Gee, I wonder why?" Leif answered sardonically, throwing his sister an exasperated glance. "Somebody has to fix all the fire systems that were pranked yesterday."

"Well, I didn't think they'd actually stay at home to try and sort it out, did I?" Siri hissed.

"Yeah, well done, sis," Leif replied dryly, as he rested his chin on his folded arms. "You managed to keep mum and dad home on a day we want them out of the house. We're never going to get this done at this rate."

"Well, that's not--"

"Guys, you don't have to whisper over there," Astrid said, flicking her eyes towards the bickering siblings. "We're just trying to sort out these plans, and then we'll be out of your hair."

"But--" Siri started anxiously, "-we really need to get this done. For some reason, we're really behind."

"For some reason," Leif scoffed quietly, causing Siri to glare at him with narrowed eyes.

"I'm sorry guys," Hiccup said sheepishly, as he glanced towards them from his desk. "I know you need to finish your plans, but unfortunately we can't just leave the fire protection systems the way they are." Glancing down at the plans in front of him, he sighed. "If they'd just taken out a few of them, I probably wouldn't have minded," he admitted, with a twitch of a grin. "I mean, it's something Ruff and Tuff would have done back in the day."

"Ordinarily, I still would have blamed them," Astrid admitted out with a grin. "But considering Ruff can barely even waddle at present, let alone sabotage a fire system, I highly doubt it was either of them."

"By the stories I was getting last night, I think it was teenagers," Hiccup said, as he made a few adjustments to the blueprints. "Nothing too unusual."

"Haven't you almost finished with the modifications, though?" Siri asked him, hopefully, as she tried to ignore the guilt gnawing at her insides. "It's just that we need to get this done..."

"Why don't you just go up to your room?" Astrid suggested, glancing over at the three children. "We won't eavesdrop, I promise. Besides," she continued, "we'll be out of your hair by lunchtime. Surely you don't have that much to do?"

"I guess we could wait until lunch..." Siri started slowly, only to be interrupted by her brother, who shook his head wildly in his sister's direction.

"We have to get this sorted, Seer!" Leif exclaimed.

"Leif, we can't do much with mum and dad in the house anyway," Siri said, throwing her parents an apologetic glance. "What if we start again after lunch? I promise I won't go far."

"Yeah, right," Leif mumbled, before uttering a sigh. "Fine," he drawled, as he glanced up at her. "But you better be here."

Ingrid nodded in agreement. "Be back at lunchtime," the five year old agreed, with a nod.

"I'll be back at lunchtime; Vikings honour," Siri promised them, holding a hand up in front of her.

"We'll be gone by the time you get back, I promise," Astrid assured her with a smile, as Siri headed towards the door.

"Thanks, mum," Siri smiled, before she headed out the door, only to almost instantly run into Len and his Nightmare in the process. Seeing his friend, though, Lennart threw her a frown.

"What are you doing, Seer?" he asked her, bewildered, looking around the area for Leif and Ingrid. "I thought you were supposed to be finishing your treasure hunt notes?"

"Bit hard when mum and dad are at home," Siri explained, glancing back towards the house. "Dad's... urgh... \_trying\_ to work out how to fix the fire systems."

"And whose fault is that?" Lennart asked her, with a hint of a smile. "I admit it was a good prank you guys did, but it went a little \_too\_ far."

"You don't need to rub it in," Siri groaned, bringing a hand to her face.

Lennart chuckled. "I wasn't. I was just saying," he pointed out. "But why does your parents being home mean you can't plan?"

"You do know my dad and Appreciation Day, don't you?" Siri asked him, eyebrows raised in amusement. "He'll eavesdrop!"

"I think he's too busy fixing the mess you guys made of the village," Lennart grinned, which Siri sheepishly returned. "I doubt he'll be listening. Just go into your room and close the door. It's got to get finished."

"And it will," Siri said. "After lunch."

"Seer," Len sighed, with a shake of his head. "Don't tell me you're meeting Gerold again? Look what happened yesterday."

"And it's because of that, that I won't stay long," Siri assured him, with a comforting touch to the boy's arm. "I promised Leif I'll be back at lunch, and I will. When mum and dad leave, I'll come home. Besides," she added, as she made her way towards the village. "I don't think Gerold will want to risk getting into trouble again."

"Well, do you want me to go and help Leif and Ingrid?" Lennart asked her, throwing an uncertain glance towards the house. "I'm finished with my plans-"

Siri shook her head with a smile. "I'll be home" she said. "But thanks anyway. I'll see you later!"

"Yeah, seeya," Lennart said with a sigh, as he watched the fourteen year old head off toward the direction of the Great Hall, before he turned to the Monstrous Nightmare beside him. "I don't know about you, boy, but I have a feeling Siri won't be home on time." He groaned. "Come on, boy, let's go and see if the kids need our help. Just in case. I don't trust Gerold not to get her home on time."

\* \* \*

><p>"Alright...what are you guys whispering about?"<p>

Hearing his girlfriend's voice, Gerold started, and glancing up from his conversation, he saw the teenage girl standing in front of him; arms crossed and eyebrows raised in curiosity as she watched the group glance nervously around them.

"Hey, Seer!" Gerold greeted her cheerfully, as he held out his arms for her. "What are you doing here? I thought you needed to finish your treasure hunt thing?"

"Yeah, well," Siri started sheepishly, as she gave the boy a quick embrace, "it's a little hard to do that when my parents are still at home. Trying to fix the mess we made yesterday," she elaborated, making Gerold's eyes widen in understanding.

"Oh."

"Yeah, oh," Siri said with a sigh. "So, because of our little stunt, my parents won't leave until at least lunchtime, and we're really pushing it as it is."

"Oh, you'll get it done," Brenna said, absently, waving a hand at the idea. "It's not like it has to be perfect. Besides, Seer," she added with a glance at the girl, "you can't tell me you didn't enjoy yesterday. You actually had \_fun\_ for once."

"What do you mean, I had \_fun\_ for once?" Siri shot back, throwing the fifteen year old a hard stare. "Just because I don't play tricks on people all the time, doesn't mean I don't have \_fun\_!"

"Yeah, and playing the perfect heir, and hanging out with Lennart is \_so \_much fun," Brenna sneered, causing Siri to clench her fists in fury. "Seriously, Seer, you're the picture of perfection."

"And what's that supposed to mean?!" Siri exclaimed heatedly, taking a step towards her, leading Gerold to take a hasty step between them.

"Brenna, don't start," he warned her, as Brenna's hazel eyes flashed dangerously. "Just because you're a rebel doesn't mean we all have to be."

"Well, if you're not a rebel, then I guess you won't be joining in with our little prank then," Brenna smirked.

"What prank?" Siri asked, flicking her eyes between the two teenagers. "What were you up to when I arrived?"

Throwing Brenna an icy stare, Gerold quickly turned to Siri with a slight shrug.

"It's nothing, Seer. We were just going to pull another little prank is all. It's nothing major."

"How little?" Siri asked him, causing the other boys to shift nervously in their positions. "Gerold, how could you think to pull another prank after what we did last night?! Do you know how much work my dad has to do today?"

"Which is why we're not doing anything that will require any clean-up," Oleg told her, his expression unfazed as Siri threw him an unimpressed glance. "We're just going to scare some people, that's all."

"Yeah, and that's what yesterday's plan was too," Siri muttered bitterly.

"Yeah, well, this time, that's all it is," Gerold assured her, as he threw her a soft smile. Glancing around the immediate area to see

they wouldn't be overheard, he quickly leant in closer to her. "We're going to set a wild dragon loose in the village," he whispered to her, causing Siri's eyes to widen in horror.

"Are you kidding me?!" Siri exclaimed, shaking her head in disbelief. "You call that a \_little scare\_?" She looked at the others incredulously. "Do you know how dangerous that could be? \_Especially\_ with all the fire protection systems out of order!"

"Told you she wouldn't do it," Brenna scoffed, throwing the Haddock girl a smug look. "I sometimes wonder if you're really a teenager, Siri."

"I sometimes wonder if \_you \_are," Siri retorted angrily. She glanced at Gerold. "Please don't tell me you're doing to do this, Gerold? It's stupid!"

"Oh, come on, Seer," Gerold said dryly. "It's just a bit of fun. It's not like we're going to let it burn down the whole village or anything. We're better dragon trainers than that."

"We're not experts, Gerold!" Siri snapped, as panic engulfed her. "What we did last night was funny, but this...this is just plain stupid!"

"And what are you doing to do?" Brenna asked her. "Tell on us? You do realise that means your parents will find out you were a part of everything too..."

"That is true, Seer," Gerold pointed out, causing the girl to glance at him in irritation. "I mean, we won't tell if you won't. You don't have to join in."

"And have you lot kill yourselves with a rogue dragon?" Siri shook her head. "I don't think so." Emitting a sigh, Siri threw Brenna and the other boys an irritated glance. "Fine," she said. "I'll come. But I \_have \_to be home to help my brother and sister with the treasure hunt after lunch."

"I doubt it'll take that long," Oleg said, throwing the girl a reassuring smile. "We just have to find a dragon, lure it to the village, and then get it out. It won't be too hard."

"Whatever you say," Siri sighed. Turning to Gerold, she shook her head at him. "Gerold, I like you, but this is just a stupid idea."

"Every teenager does it from time to time, Seer," Gerold pointed out to her gently, as he took her hand in his own. "It's not going to hurt just to pull a small prank and leave it at that. I promise we won't take it too far."

Siri bit her lip uncertainly. "You sure?"

"I promise," Gerold replied, squeezing her hand gently. "I mean, we might be teenagers. But even we don't want to make a complete mess of everything."

\* \* \*

><p>"Yeash, I know you said you didn't want to make a complete mess of things, but this dragon wouldn't scare my <em>sister</em>, let alone a burly group of Vikings. Are you sure it's wild?"

"Well, we \_did\_ \_find\_ it in the forest."

"Yeah, and it's an overgrown puppy dog," Siri scoffed, as she watched Brenna and Oleg coax the wild Monstrous Nightmare towards the village as it came into sight. "I mean, if you're going to do this prank, the least you could have done is find a more ferocious dragon. I think Toothless has more edge to him."

"In alpha mode, maybe," Gerold chuckled. "But yeah, I think we should have searched around a little more," he agreed, as the Monstrous Nightmare in question licked an unimpressed Brenna right up the face. "This thing wouldn't scare anything." Eyebrows knitted together, Gerold glanced over towards his girlfriend. "Since when were you all for this plan?"

"I wasn't until I saw how much of a bust it was going to be," Siri giggled, as the dragon continued its bout of affection. "Now I really wish we \_could\_ scare the hell out of some people." She frowned. "That's weird for me to say."

"Yeah, it is," Gerold grinned. "Usually you're such a perfectionist goody two-shoes. It's weird for a teenager. Hey!" he chuckled, as Siri nudged him in the ribs.

"Can I help it if I don't like being a typical teenager?" she asked him, throwing him a warm smile. "Plus I don't really think about it when I'm hanging with Lennart. He's the complete opposite of what you'd expect from a teenager; which is weird considering who his father is."

"I think his brothers will make up for that," Gerold said. "They're little show offs as it is. But to be honest, I think he has \_too\_ much of his mother in him. He \_never\_ does anything wrong. Yeah, I know, I know," he hastily added, seeing Siri's disgruntled expression, "he's your friend and you care for him. But you have to admit it's true."

"That's his decision," Siri said defensively. "Even if it \_can\_ \_get\_ a little annoying at times," she added thoughtfully, before she suddenly shook her head and glanced over towards the rest of the group, just in time for to notice that the previously affectionate Monstrous Nightmare was starting to get slightly restless. As Gerold continued to blabber on beside her, Siri's azure eyes watched as the dragon began to shake its horned head from side to side the closer they approached the village; its wide eyes dilating in the process. Knowing what was going to happen, Siri's heart skipped a beat.

"Let go of it!" Siri screamed fearfully, as the dragon began to back up. "It's getting scared! We have to get it away from the village!"

"It's just being stubborn!" Brenna replied stubbornly, as she pulled tightly on the rope around the dragon's neck.

Pandemonium broke out as the dragon flinched away violently from her, beginning to thrash around, scattering the small throng of Vikings in

disarray. Trees snapped and spot fires flared; a dark pall of smoke began to fill the scene as Siri lay on the ground, spluttering, trying to get her senses back after closely dodging a flailing tail swipe.

"You idiot!" Siri roared after Brenna, who was standing shock still in her original position. "It was already scared, and you go and that?! Didn't you learn anything in dragon training?!"

"I didn't mean it!" Brenna exclaimed fearfully, as she remained frozen in her spot. "I...I thought it was just being stubborn!"

"Well, thanks to you, we're in big trouble!" Gerold exclaimed, as he watched the dragon head for the centre of the village. "Come on, we have to get it out of here!"

The teenager hurried after the enraged dragon, Brenna hanging in the back of the group with a half-dumbstruck, half-mortified look on her face. As they rounded a corner, they spotted the wreckage left behind; a cart smashed into pieces, a pile of boxes and nearby hay bales smouldering, and a small flock of sheep whose eyes were practically leaving their head. There were very few Vikings visible, and the ones that were putting out small patches of fire or staring slack-jawed at what they saw happened; Siri wondered how long it had been since some of them had seen a dragon attack. This thought exited her mind swiftly as the group rounded a corner and collided into the rear leg of said rampaging dragon; it was replaced with a variety of curse words and a lone "Crap!" leapt from her mouth. Turning to face the sound and impact, the Dragon snarled and smoke raised from its flared nostrils. This was all it took to send the small group splintering away in random directions from the dragon. As Siri ran, she spotted a small mob of adults who had armed themselves with brooms and chairs and were milling around, unsure of where to head. Heading towards the, she spotted Brenna between two houses hyperventilating and Gerold hiding under the porch of another house, keeping an eye on the dragon.

"We are in deep trouble," Siri said, as she watched the scene in front of her, where Gobber, Amund and Snotlout, carefully cornered the frightened dragon in the village square, only for it to take off in the opposite direction; much to the dismay of the lingering Vikings. Racing over to Gerold, Siri skidded to a halt and dropped to her knees beside him.

"What are we going to do?" she hissed. "If we chase after it, they're going to know it was us."

"Well, we have to do something!" Gerold exclaimed, as he crawled out from under the porch. "We're the ones that got into this mess." He sighed. "So much for the prank."

Siri threw him an irritated glance. "Well, I told you this was a bad idea, didn't I? Now look what's happened!"

"Well, I didn't think it was going to turn out this way!" Gerold replied, anxiously, as he watched Snotlout suddenly pin the dragon to the ground by its horns; immediately calming the beast. "Whew," Gerold sighed. "I think they got him."



"Of course they did," Siri said bitterly. "They've been doing this much longer than us."

Gerold turned to her with an awkward expression. "Seer," he began quietly. "I didn't mean to make you angry. I just...thought it would be fun."

"Yeah, well, it was until Brenna did what she did," Siri said angrily, before she emitted a sigh. "I know you guys like to act like idiots at times, but you really have to learn what a prank is and what isn't. What would have happened if I had gone back...home?" Siri's face paled as she quickly glanced up at the sky. "Gerold," she said slowly. "What time is it?"

Following her line of sight, Gerold frowned. "I don't know," he said thoughtfully. "About 2. Why?"

Siri's stomach dropped. "Oh, crap!" she exclaimed, as she suddenly sprung to her feet. "I'm late \_again. \_Leif and Ingrid are going to so mad at me! I should have just stayed at home! Appreciation Day is more important." She groaned. "I'm going to be in so much trouble."

"I'm sorry, Seer," Gerold said sincerely, as he placed a comforting hand on Siri's hand. "I didn't mean for this to happen. I just thought it would be better than being stuck at home doing Appreciation Day stuff."

"It might have been if this hadn't happened," Siri admitted, nodding her head to the mess the dragon had made. "But now I'm late and I'm going to be in trouble off more than just Leif. And I'm going to deserve it."

"You're not just going to take a grounding, are you?" Gerold asked her, incredulously. "You didn't do anything your dad wouldn't have done at this age."

"That's your opinion," Siri sighed, as she glanced at towards her house. "I better go."

"I'll see you tomorrow?" Gerold asked her, nervously, causing Siri to look back at him with a sigh.

"Yeah, I will," Siri assured him with a small smile. "I just...need to get home. Something tells me I'm going to be in \_deep\_ trouble."

\* \* \*

><p><em>I think it's safe to say that Siri is in deep trouble next chapter!<em>

\_Anyway, so this is the end of the first part, and the second part is straight after this. Also, \_\_\*\*Takknemlighet \*\*\_\_DOES just mean Appreciation in Nordic. But the word was so horrific to spell, I just used the English translation. \_

\_OK, so as you can tell, Siri is very slowly starting to get drawn into Gerold's group. Siri has always been very easy to influence, as shown in other chapters, and this is no different. She is a teenager,

has a boyfriend, and wants to start fitting in, and because of that is making big mistakes. And this is just the beginning. Gerold doesn't think what he's doing is wrong, just typical teenage stuff, but it's enough for some people to possibly have a negative opinion on him. I just wanted to start showing what hormones and peer pressure can do on people, especially on family, as shown with Leif and Ingrid in this chapter. \_

\_Also, I know in this chapter the fire protection systems are not as they were in the movie/show, but Hiccup has done some modifications (which better fit with the prank). But I think they'll be changed back after what happened! :p\_

\_Ok, so, **\*\*DON'T FORGET TO REVIEW!\*\*** **\*\*I KNOW IT'S BEEN AGES, BUT I WOULD APPRECIATE THE FEEDBACK!** **\*\*Just remember, though, that I still DO NOT TOLERATE FLAMES, but KIND constructive criticism is accepted. SORRY FOR THE LONG WAIT, ONCE AGAIN!\_**

\_Thanks for reading! :D \_

### 43. Chapter 43: Appreciation Day

\_Ok, so **\*\*this is the second part of this storyline\*\*** and it's about to get interesting. We're going to see what happens after those pranks and Appreciation Day. Some of the things in this chapter, especially coming from Siri, might surprise you a little, but you just have to remember that she's a teenager now, and that brings a lot of new problems.\_

\_Also, if you notice any grammar mistakes in this chapter, I apologise. I did my own edits, but unfortunately, my boyfriend was unable to do a second round of edits like usual, so some things may have been missed. \_

\_Anyway, on with the chapter!\_

\* \* \*

><p><span>Chapter 43 â€" Appreciation Day<span>

Siri's stomach did a somersault as she approached the house. Not only was she late \_again, \_she was nauseous of the thought of what her parents would say if they found out she was behind today's fiasco. The whole prank had seemed so innocent, yet the result made Siri's stomach churn, causing bile to rise in the fourteen year old's throat. Swallowing hard, she reached out her hand and slowly pushed open the door.

"Hey guys! I'm sorry I'm...late..."

Siri trailed off as she was met by four withering stares of disappointment. "I was, uh, with Gerold, and then a wild dragon went berserk in the village and we had to hide..."

The room remained silent as Siri's eyes moved from one face to another before falling on Leif's, whose face was now wrinkled in fury at his older sister, arms crossed in front of his chest. Siri's gaze paused on his face for a second before a sudden, draining realization came over her; Leif had told their parents. Eyes snapping to stare at

a spot on the wall halfway between her parents, Siri arched her back and became very rigid as she felt the blood leave her face. She could make out both her parents' faces despite not looking directly at either of them, both uniformly scowled, while beside them, Ingrid's lip was stuck out in a sign that she had or was going to have an uncommon temper tantrum. Anger boiling in the pit of the teenager's stomach, Siri's eyes flashed back to her brother.

"You told them?!" Siri screeched, causing Leif to startle slightly. "How...how could you?! You promised you wouldn't!"

"No, I promised I wouldn't if you actually helped Ingrid and me with the Appreciation Day thing!" Leif shot back, face reddening in anger. "You promised to help me get this plan sorted, but you went off with Gerold to do silly pranks instead!"

"That's no excuse to tattle on me, though!" Siri exclaimed, furiously, azure eyes filling with tears of anger as she glared at her younger brother. "You're supposed to be my brother. How could you do this to me?!"

"THAT'S ENOUGH!" Astrid roared, instantly silencing the two belligerent siblings. "I don't care why Leif told us, but the fact of the matter is that he did, and I'm glad he did." Turning her attention to her eldest daughter, the Cheiftainess just shook her head in disappointment. "Honestly, Siri, what in hel's name were you thinking?! What made you think that putting all the fire protection systems out of order was a good idea?!"

"But-" Siri stuttered, "I thought you said it was funny!"

"It would have been if it had only been just a few, Siri," her father said, before Astrid could respond. "But what you and Gerold did was beyond stupid. Do you know what could have happened if we hadn't gotten that dragon under control today with all the fire systems out?"

Siri's stomach dropped. "It could have destroyed the village," she said quietly, tears of embarrassment filling her eyes once again.

"That's exactly what could have happened!" Astrid exclaimed, her anger nowhere near abated. "And what's even worse, is that not only do I find out that my daughter was a part of both pranks, is that she was with her boyfriend and his group of idiot friends at the time! I thought you had more sense than to follow that group, Siri!"

"I'm sorry!" Siri exclaimed tearfully. "I didn't mean for it to go so far. I just wanted to have some fun. We didn't mean anything by it!"

"That was not a bit of fun, young lady, and you know it," Hiccup said, with a sigh. "Siri, what you did today put everyone in danger, and what's worse is that Gerold and his group of friends are influencing you in ways that I thought better of you! I mean, yesterday you were all excited about Appreciation Day, but spend some time with him, and you're off pranking the village, and breaking promises to your brother and sister!"

"But I didn't mean, too!" Siri exclaimed loudly, as she glanced desperately between her two disapproving parents. "I just got carried away and forgot that's all!"

"Twice?" her mother questioned, with a shake of her head. "Siri, forgetting once yesterday I can understand, but you knew you could have planned today with us here, and you blatantly ignored that and went to hang out with Gerold anyway! You're just lucky that Lennart came along after you left to help Leif and Ingrid out-"

Siri suddenly frowned. "What do you mean, Lennart came along to help?" she asked. "I told him I'd be back in a few hours."

"Well, obviously even he knew that wasn't going to happen," Hiccup said, giving his daughter a critical eye. "He showed up after you left and went upstairs to help Leif and Ingrid with the rest of your plans-"

"And it only took about an hour!" Leif shot at Siri. "One hour and we were all planned! Len isn't even our brother, yet he helped more than you did!"

"Well, it wasn't up to him, was it?!" Siri spat, causing Leif to step back behind his mother; his lip quivering.

"Well, if you actually acted like our sister, none of this would have happened!"

"You pwomised to help!" Ingrid chimed in tearfully, as she clung to her father's hand.

"But I was just late!" Siri insisted, throwing her hands up in the air in desperation. "Like, I know what we did today was stupid, but-"

"IT WASN'T JUST STUPID, IT WAS COMPLETELY IMMATURE!" Astrid roared, silencing the teenager's protests. "You're the heir of Berk, Siri, but today you showed how much we can't trust you! How can we start giving you some responsibility if you act like a child?!"

"I'm sorry!" Siri exclaimed, as she glanced up towards her father, whose eyes were wide in surprise at his wife's outburst. "I know what I did was stupid, but I didn't think we were doing anything wrong! We were only having some fun. I never meant to break my promise! It will never happen again, I promise!"

"How am I supposed to believe you when you already broke your promise to your brother?" Astrid said; her voice now a little calmer. "Your best friend had to help with your Appreciation Day plans while you and Gerold were off who-knows-where pulling mindless pranks!" Heaving a deep sigh, Astrid quickly glanced over to her husband, who understanding what she was doing, suddenly nodded, before glancing back to his eldest child, who was glancing up at her parents in shock.

"Siri," Hiccup sighed, "you're grounded for the next two weeks. Which-"

"G...grounded!" Siri spluttered, her azure eyes widening in astonishment. "But...but I said I was sorry! How much more can I

\_say\_?!"

"You are grounded for two weeks, Siri," Astrid repeated; her daughter's protests falling on deaf ears. "And in this time, you may not go dragon training, you are not to go flying, and you are not," she emphasised the word greatly, as she glanced at her daughter's stunned face, "to see Gerold. He's been influencing you, and I don't like it-

"He hasn't influenced me! He was just having some fun!"

"That may be true, Seer, but this is our decision," Hiccup said calmly, as he glanced down at his two younger children, who were in tears by his side. "You've let your brother and sister down, and acted in a way that put other people in danger, and that can't be ignored. But you can still join in with tomorrow if you want. Your grounding will just start once the activities are finished-

"Don't bother," Siri snapped, as she turned her back on them. "If you're that ashamed of me, it's probably best if I don't join in tomorrow. Leif and Ingrid can do it on their own!"

"Siri, we aren't-" her mother started guiltily, only to be cut off by the sound of Siri slamming the front door, which echoed so loudly, the portraits on the walls threatened to fall from their places.

"Oh, yeah, I love just being grounded for no reason!" Siri screamed back towards the closed door, before she stomped off towards the direction of the village. "Why am I the one that's always is trouble?"

"Um...Seer?"

Biting her lip in fury, Siri wrenched her head up to see Lennart standing awkwardly near the house, his hands twisting around nervously in front of him.

"What do you want?" Siri asked, harshly, making Lennart's eyes widen in surprise. "Come to see how much trouble you've gotten me into?"

"Siri," Lennart said softly, as he stepped toward her cautiously, "I didn't want to get you in trouble. I just wanted to help the guys out in case you forgot again."

"Some friend you are, if you jumped straight to the conclusion that I wasn't going to show up," Siri said bitterly, as she lowered her gaze to the grass below.

"Siri, you know that's not what I meant," Lennart said, unfazed as his friend glanced back up at him; her eyes flashing dangerously. "You guys were behind as it was. I just wanted to give you all a head start."

"And did you?" Siri asked him, her voice quieter. "I...I didn't ask."

"We got it all done, yeah," Lennart confirmed with a nod. "You guys just have to hide them all in the morning."

"You mean, they will be," Siri corrected him, angrily, as she glanced back to the house. "I'm not joining in. I'm grounded."

Lennart frowned. "But surely, you're still allowed-"

"To join in?" she finished for him. She laughed bitterly. "Yeah, sure, I'm allowed to join in, but why should I if they're so angry at me that they won't even let me apologise?" She shook her head sadly. "No, I'm staying home," she said quietly. "But thanks for helping them anyway, Len." She threw him a small smile.

"Siri, I'm sure they didn't mean it," the fourteen year old reasoned, as he placed a hand on her arm gently. "They're probably just really mad-"

"Yeah, well, I tried to apologise, and they wouldn't listen," Siri said, her temper beginning to flare again, as she jerked her arm away from Lennart. "I'll see you later."

"But-" Lennart started, frantically, as Siri went off towards the village once more. "Will I see you tomorrow?"

"I doubt it," Siri replied, not even bothering to turn back towards her stunned friend. "I'll see you later."

"Yeah, seeya," Lennart said lamely, as he watched her walk off into the distance. He sighed.

" Great. Just great."

\* \* \*

><p>"I have to admit. I never thought I'd see you skipping out on Appreciation Day," Gerold admitted, glancing over towards his girlfriend, as she angrily yanked blades of grass out of the soggy ground. "Was it <em>that <em>bad?"

"You have no idea," Siri said bitterly, as she pulled yet another blade of grass from the sodden dirt. "Honestly, I don't know why I even bother apologising. It's not like they listen anyway." Raising her head, she glanced at her companion. "How did you fare? If you're here, you couldn't have gotten in too much trouble."

"Well, I got yelled at for a good half an hour," Gerold confessed, with an awkward chuckle. "And most of that was from Sorsi. But no, I didn't get grounded if that's what you're implying. Although I have a feeling they won't forget it anytime soon," he added thoughtfully.

Siri snorted angrily. "At least you got let off," she said irritably, as she returned her attention back to the grass beneath her. "I said I was sorry a million times, yet they wouldn't have a bar of it. I just got lectured on how 'immature'-" she made quotation marks in the air, "-I acted and how I should have known better and all that, and then they ground me for two weeks! And to top it all off, they forbid me to see you because they said you influenced me!" Huffing, Siri irately threw the clump of grass clutched in her hand as far from her as she could. "Seriously, it's like those two never made a mistake in

their lives!"

"All parents are hypocrites, Seer," Gerold shrugged, as he scooted closer to the irate girl. "They go around telling you not to do this, and not to do that, and yet they probably did worse than us at our age. Why do you think it's stupid that we have to join in with this dumb tradition?"

"I still like the day," Siri pointed out, sadly, as she glanced up towards the Great Hall, where a crowd of Vikings was already making its way for the celebrations. "But at the moment, I couldn't care less if I ever joined in again. I'm sick of being treated like a child. I don't know," she sighed, as she turned her attention back to the boy beside her. "I think I might just hang out with you today; until you have to go, anyway," she added, with a knowing glance towards Gerold, who gave her a sheepish smile.

"Well, it was better than doing Sorsi's chores for the rest of my life," he pointed out, with a quick glance towards the Great Hall. "Even though I'd rather not. At least you get out of it, though."

"I'm still not going," Siri said stubbornly, as she crossed her arms in front of her chest. "I don't care if I am on my own, I'd rather be here on my own than pretend I'm happy all day when I'm not."

"I wouldn't either," Gerold said, with a shake of his head. "It's unfair that they punished you like that. Besides, Leif and Ingrid can do this on their own. They know the plan."

"Yeah, they know the plan, but I think they'd prefer to have their sister with them."

Surprised, Siri and Gerold glanced up towards their visitor, who just happened to be Lennart, accompanied with his sword, as he readied to head to the celebrations.

"I thought you'd be at the Great Hall by now," Gerold said, dryly, as Lennart sat beside the two teenagers.

"I'm about to head there now," Lennart said, unfazed by Gerold's cool tone. "I just came by to see if Siri had changed her mind about joining in with the party."

Siri sighed. "I told you Len, I'm not going," she said, not meeting her eyes with the other boy. "Besides, I don't think Leif and Ingrid even want to know me, let alone let me join in with them. And Leif's the one who told on me in the first place," she added huffily.

Lennart sighed. "Seer, it wasn't entirely Leif's fault," Lennart told her, gently, causing Siri to glance up at him in surprise. "Someone told your dad that someone they knew saw who pulled the pranks, and that they were coming to tell him. Leif told on you to save you getting into deeper trouble. Although you not showing up also played a part, I'll admit," he added quickly, seeing as Siri was about to retort. "But it wasn't entirely out of spite."

"He still shouldn't have told on me, though," Siri said, angrily, as she settled back into her original position. "Whether I was late or

not, we still would have gotten those notes finished eventually. Besides," she continued, with an angry glance towards her best friend, "no matter what I said yesterday, it didn't matter! It was like they didn't even listen to me! All they cared about was telling me how childish I was, and then they ground me for \_two weeks. \_It was like nothing I said mattered at all!"

"Because they're hypocrites," Gerold muttered, causing Lennart to throw the fifteen year old an irritated glance, before he turned his attention back to Siri.

"They are not hypocrites, Seer," Lennart said, causing her to throw him an incredulous look. "They are just parents who are angry at something their child did. How did you expect them to react?"

"How about them actually \_listening\_ to me?" Siri scoffed, her anger not abating. "I know what I did was stupid, but the least they could have done was remember they did stupid things too at my age, and not treat me like I was immature kid."

"Ever thought that's \_why\_ \_they\_ reacted the way they did?" Lennart asked her, causing Siri to raise her brows in surprise. "Because they didn't want you to do something as stupid as them? Honestly, Seer, they're your parents. Did you really expect not to get some sort of punishment?"

"Well...no," Siri admitted, awkwardly, as she began twisting her braid around in her hands. "But they didn't have to be as harsh as they were. I mean, I apologised..."

"A lot," Gerold cut in, causing two sets of eyes to fall on him in annoyance. He closed his mouth uncertainly.

"Yes, I \_know\_ you apologised," Lennart said, his voice edged with boredom at the repetitiveness of the conversation. "But considering how disappointed your parents sounded when I left yesterday, I think you apologising made your grounding \_less.\_ They were just angry. Honestly, Seer, what do you think my parents do when\_ I\_ get in trouble?" Lennart asked her, with a roll of his eyes. "Do you think I get off lightly? Heck," he chuckled, "I put a spider in Sig's room last month, and I got grounded for a \_week\_ just for that! After I was blasted by mum, for what felt like an hour, of course."

"You got grounded for a week just for that?" Gerold scoffed. "And you took it? Why?"

"Because I knew it was my fault," Lennart said, dryly, not meeting the older boy's eyes. "That's a little thing called \_maturity.\_"

"More like stupidity," Gerold muttered.

"Seer, I know you're angry," Lennart said, as Gerold's comment fell on death ears. "But don't you think if you actually show up today and help with one of your favourite days of the year, that your parents are more likely to \_reduce\_ your grounding? I mean, that's what it's over isn't it?"

"I-" Siri began, only for her mouth to shut just as quickly. Glancing in surprise between her best friend and her boyfriend, Siri's anger



suddenly began to abate as the boy's words fluttered through her brain. That's usually how her parent's punishments did and always had worked. And if she hadn't been so angry, she would have realised it. Gods, she was idiot!

Groaning in embarrassment, Siri gave Lennart an awkward smile. "Has anybody told you that you are way too wise for your age?"

"Constantly," the boy answered with a grin. "Does that mean you'll come?"

Siri sighed. "I'm still mad," the teenager admitted. "But I think I would be immature if I didn't show up. It is Appreciation Day, after all."

"So you're just going to go just because Lennart said so?" Gerold said, in disbelief. "Your parents grounded you for no reason!"

"Gerold, it wasn't entirely for no reason, and you know it," Siri sighed, as she stood up from the ground, and brushing off the wet grass from her pants. "Besides, I'd never forgive myself if I never showed up." She quickly glanced over to the Great Hall, where most of the village was now beginning to crowd too, before turning back to Gerold. "Are you coming with us?" she asked him.

Gerold sighed. "Not yet," he said, with a dismayed look towards the crowded steps. "I'll come just before they start. But you can go," he smiled. "I should have known you couldn't stay away. I just...don't want to get there before I have too."

"Okay," Siri said, throwing him a small smile. "Thanks for trying to help me, but I think Len's right this time. Save your teenage rebellion ideas for another day," she chuckled.

"Sure, Seer," he said. "I'll see you later."

"See you," she said, before she turned to Lennart with a wide smile. "Come on, then," she said with a chuckle. "We better get going before it starts or else I may never hear the end of it."

\* \* \*

><p>"SIRI!"<p>

Barely stepping into the Great Hall, Siri was flabbergasted when an energized Ingrid suddenly met her at the door, crash tackling her into a hug that almost knocked the fourteen year old off her feet.

"You came!" Ingrid exclaimed joyfully, glancing up at her big sister with her wide emerald eyes. "I told Leifey you would come!"

"Really?" Siri asked her, surprised. "But...I thought you and Leif were mad at me?"

"You know Ingrid never stays mad at anyone," Leif said quietly, as he slowly made his way over towards the two sisters. "She's weird like

that-

"I am not!" Ingrid exclaimed indignantly.

Siri chuckled, before she sheepishly glanced over towards her brother, who was standing awkwardly in front of the teenager, not quite meeting her eyes.

"Len told me it wasn't entirely your fault that you told on me," Siri said gently, as she threw him a small smile.

Leif sighed. "No," he admitted, with a quick flash of a smile. "But I was really mad at you, so I did sort of do it to get you in trouble, too. Sort of," he added quietly.

"I guess I did sort of deserve it," Siri admitted guiltily. "I mean, I did break my promise to you and Ingrid when I should have been helping. I just don't think I deserved the punishment I got," she added to herself, her tone slightly bitter, before she quickly cleared her throat and gave her brother and sister a smile. "So, are you guys ready? Do you need any help setting these notes up?"

"Actually, Seer, we've...we've already done it," Leif admitted apprehensively, throwing his sister an apologetic glance. "We...we thought you weren't going to come."

"Oh," Siri said, her face falling with disappointment. "Yeah, I guess that makes sense."

"We haven't hidden the present yet, though," Leif continued; a cheerful smile forming on his lips. "Uncle Gobber has it hidden up the back of the hall to hide when mummy and daddy leave. You can help us with that, if you want?"

Siri beamed. "I'd be happy too," she said cheerfully.

"Siri!"

Siri quickly glanced up and, her stomach dropped slightly as she saw her parents hurrying towards her, with identical looks of surprise etched on their faces. Were they still so mad that maybe they didn't want her to join in with the celebrations after all? But before Siri could go further with that train of thought, she was taken aback as her mother engulfed her in her arms.

"Oh, Siri, thank Thor you did come," Astrid said, relief evident in her tone. She pulled back from her daughter with a wide smile on her face. "I thought for a while that you weren't going too."

"So did I," Siri admitted, with a sheepish smile towards her parents. "Look, mum, I'm sorry for being so rude last night. You don't deserve me not showing up. I was just so angry and annoyed, that's all..."

"Yeah, well, we shouldn't have got so angry at you last night, either," Hiccup admitted, before his wife could speak. "I mean, we've all done stupid things we regret in our lives-"

"That's for sure," Astrid murmured, causing Hiccup to

chuckle.

"Yeah, well, the point is," Hiccup continued, with a smile towards his daughter, "that we should have at least listened to you before we got angry. Even if what you did was fairly stupid. We're still standing by that."

"We're just glad you came today," Astrid said, contentedly, throwing the teenager a bright smile. "It wouldn't have been the same without you."

"I think I would have regretted not coming, too," Siri admitted, as she reached up to play with a strand of her hair. "I mean, you're going to love what we have planned for you," she added with a mischievous grin towards her two siblings, who both giggled at the curious glances crossing their parent's faces.

"Speaking of plans, when is this even starting?" Hiccup said, with a slight frown, as he scanned the area for Valka and Gobber, who were in charge of the proceedings. "I'm pretty sure everyone is...oh...speaking of..."

Just as Hiccup commented on the delay, Gobber and Valka made their way over towards the front of the hall, instantly silencing the large crowd of Vikings who were milling about. Just as they were about to speak, Siri saw Gerold sneak in through the door out of the corner of her eye, making her roll her eyes in amusement. She threw a grin at Lennart, who quickly returned the gesture, just as Gobber began to speak.

"Welcome, one and all to this year's Takknemlighet day celebrations!" Gobber exclaimed loudly; a wide toothy grin spreading across his features in the process. "And I think from the stories I have heard, it is going to be of the best yet."

"Children from every family aged five to eighteen will each show their parents just how much they mean to them by doing something they have prepared," Valka continued, explaining the idea to the families who had never taken part. "And for this to occur, every family is allowed to go whenever on the island they choose to go. So, without further ado, I declare this year's Appreciation Day celebrations officially begun!"

Chatter grew louder and louder as children suddenly began to pull their parents away from the Great Hall, explaining details of their plans enthusiastically to their families. Turning to their parents, Siri, Leif and Ingrid laughed at the looks of anticipation growing in their own parents faces.

"I hope you guys are ready for a bit of walking because we have a bit of an interesting surprise for you two," Siri grinned, as she held out her hand to Leif, who produced the map from inside his shirt, and handed it to Siri, who handed it to her father with an excited smile crossing her lips.

"Use this map to find the clues Leif and Ingrid have hidden around the island," Siri explained to them as they looked down at the map in slight bewilderment. "In each location, you will get closer and closer to finding the present we helped Uncle Gobber make for you. But no cheating!" Siri added quickly, as her father opened his mouth

to comment. "You have to find every single clue in order to get your present!"

"Yeah, we worked hard on those clues. You're not skipping \_any,"\_ Leif added with a grin.

"It's no wonder you guys needed to plan!" Astrid exclaimed, optimistically. "This must have taken ages to do!"

"Not really," Leif admitted. "It was just\_ really\_ annoying."

"It was cool!" Ingrid chimed in cheerfully.

"I think it is too," Hiccup said, his tone impressed. He threw the three children a smile. "This is the best idea you guys have ever come up with. Thank Thor you guys \_didn't\_ tell us." He turned to his wife with a grin. "Should we go milady? I think this may take a while."

"I'm game," Astrid grinned. She turned to the kids. "We'll see you guys soon, then."

"Just a heads up," Siri said quickly, as her parents began to leave. "Some of the notes are at your friend's houses. They know you're coming, though."

Hiccup nodded at her with a smile. "Thanks, Seer." He turned to Toothless, who was lounging around beside him. "You coming, bud?" he asked the dragon.

Glancing up from his spot on the floor, Toothless gave out a huge yawn, before settling his head back down on his paws without as much as a second glance.

"I guess not, then," Hiccup said, surprised.

"Don't worry, dad, Toothless is staying with us to help," Siri said, with a smile towards the dragon.

"Alright, then," Hiccup smiled. "We'll see you later."

"Have fun!" Leif yelled after them, as Hiccup and Astrid went out the towering door of the Great Hall. As soon as they were out of sight, the eight year old quickly waved Gobber and Valka over to them.

"Come on, let's get this present hidden. I don't want them reaching the end before we've even managed to \_hide \_this thing."

\* \* \*

><p>"You know, as much as I love this idea, why didn't the kids have us start at the <em>Great Hall<em>? Having to walk all the way back home, then around the village is torture."

"Sounds to me you're getting a little lazy there, babe," Astrid chuckled, as she and Hiccup left their fourth objective. "I think you rely on Toothless a little\_ too\_ much."

"You're telling me," Hiccup mumbled, as he consulted the map once more. "Wow," he said, squinting his eyes towards the messy

handwriting. "Leif could use some handwriting lessons. This is pretty bad."

"Gee, I wonder where I wonder he got that from," Astrid said, throwing her husband a playful grin. "Your writing isn't exactly eligible either."

"At least I can read it," Hiccup chuckled, before he read out the fifth clue. "From the dragons sleeping spot, visit your friend that has dragons on the brain, and find the clue they agreed to hide." Hiccup snorted. "Sounds like Fishlegs and Ruffnut's place to me."

"Who else has dragons on the brain?" Astrid pointed out with a grin. "You know, this may not be very hard, but the kids have put a lot of work into it. It's a wonder you never came up with this idea when you were a kid."

"So do I," Hiccup admitted, as he and Astrid headed towards Ruff and Fishlegs place. "Which makes me wonder how much smarter these kids are from us."

"They have your brains, babe," Astrid said, wrapping a hand around Hiccup's with a smile. "There's no doubt about it."

"And your stubbornness," Hiccup added with a cheeky grin, resulting in a punch to the shoulder from his wife. "Yep, and that still hurts after all these years." He winced as he rubbed his arm lightly. "Ouch."

"You're welcome," Astrid giggled, before she gave Hiccup a quick peck on the cheek. "Now let's get our next clue before we waste the whole day."

"At this rate, everyone else will be back at the Great Hall long before we're even finished," Hiccup grinned, as they approached Fishlegs and Ruffnut's front door. "Um," Hiccup started awkwardly, as he reached cautiously for the door handle. "Do we just go in?"

"Siri said the guys all have notes hidden, so I'm guessing so," Astrid said.

"You can come in guys!" came Ruffnut's voice from inside the house. "I'm still home!"

"That answers that," Hiccup said, surprised, as he pushed the door open, to reveal Ruffnut, spread out comfortably on the wooden couch by the door. Seeing Hiccup and Astrid come in, though, she sat up into a more welcoming position, but made no move to get up.

"I'd stand up, but I really think it would take longer then you want to stay here," she said to them, as she winced uncomfortably at her eight month pregnant belly. "Ergh. I forgot how uncomfortable this is."

Astrid chuckled in sympathy. "Tell me about it. I know the feeling. You planning on anymore after this, Ruff?" she asked the woman, who glanced up at her friend with wide eyes.

"Oh Thor, no," Ruffnut said, with a wild shake of her head. "It's a

wonder I even agreed for this one." She nodded to her swollen belly. "I mean, I'm excited and all, but waddling around like a duck is not a lot of fun. Especially when your dumb brother says so," she scoffed. "It's also the reason I decided not to join in with the others today," she sighed, as she caressed her belly. "I didn't feel like walking around the forest looking like this now, did I?"

"What are your kids doing?" Hiccup asked her, as he tried to move past the baby talk.

"Some sort of dragon show, I think. Kelda didn't say much," Ruffnut said, with a shrug. "Anyway, your note is on the table." She nodded to the kitchen table nearby. "I didn't feel like hiding it."

"Thanks, Ruff," Astrid said, as she went over to the table and picked it up. "Are you going to be right here on your own?"

"I'm fine." Ruffnut shrugged her off. "I'm just tired. You go and have fun with that treasure hunt...thingy."

"Alright, then," Astrid chuckled, as she consulted the next note. "From the dragon nut, to your next friend's house, go to the place where the brother hibernates."

"Hey, that's good!" Hiccup laughed, as Astrid and Ruffnut howled with laughter beside him. "That has to be Lennart's doing. He's pretty good with words."

"It's well done," Astrid agreed, continuing to giggle.

"Sounds like Tuffnut to me," Ruffnut said dryly. "Too bad they're not at home. Annika would have loved that."

"I know she would have," Hiccup said cheerfully. "Well, thanks Ruff, we better go," he added, before he and Astrid made their way towards Tuffnut and Annika's, where after a fair amount of searching, the next note was finally located hidden beneath a pile of toys.

"I think it's safe to say that Annika hid that one," Astrid said, as she and Hiccup finally left the house. "It was positioned a little too neatly for the kids to have gotten it."

"And too well hidden for Tuff to have thought of it," Hiccup added, as he looked down at the following clue. "Leaving this place, now head east, to the place where the friend grinds your teeth." Hiccup snorted. "Oh, that's Lennart again," he chuckled, as Astrid shook her head in amusement. "That's his father to a tee!"

"It's amazing how much the kid knows his father," Astrid grinned, as she and Hiccup headed towards Snotlout and Anna's. "You know this is actually fun," she said, throwing her husband a content smile. "Maybe we should have the kids do this every year."

"Might get a little boring," Hiccup pointed out, but he smiled at her all the same. "But it is fun. Maybe..." Hiccup trailed off, as he and Astrid approached the house, where the sounds of loud shouting could be heard from inside. Turning to his wife, he frowned. "Wonder what's going on?" he said. "I thought the boys were doing a mini Thawfest type thing?"

Astrid shrugged. "I don't know," she said, frowning deeper as she heard the yelling once again. "It sounds like Snotlout," she noted, as she cautiously knocked on the door, which was quickly opened by a bemused looking Anna, with Lennart standing beside her.

"Is everything alright in there, Anna?" Astrid asked, bewildered, wincing as she heard Snotlout raise his voice again. "I thought you were off doing your Thawfest games?"

"We were," Lennart said with sheepish chuckle. "Until Sigmund shot an arrow a little too close to Rona for dad's liking."

"You idiots could have killed her!" Snotlout's loud voice sounded from the top floor, causing Anna to exchange a slight look of amusement with her eldest son. "You don't just go firing a bow and arrow randomly without checking to see that anybody is around! Your sister is easily missed. What were you thinking?!"

Anna shook her head. "He's overdramatising just a little," she explained to a bewildered Hiccup and Astrid. "Rona wasn't that close. Although they really should have been watching what they doing," she added, with slight annoyance in her tone. "They are going to be grounded for that. It's just Snotlout being Snotlout."

"Being overprotective more like it," Lennart chuckled, before he turned his attention to Hiccup and Astrid with a smile. "How's Siri?" he asked them. "Was she happy she'd finally joined you?"

Hiccup smiled. "She was once it started," he said, with a grateful smile towards the fourteen year old. "Thanks for getting her to come round, Len. We appreciate it."

"Once I got Gerold to shut up it helped as well," Lennart said, his tone slightly bitter. "I mean, the guy treats her well, and he really cares for her, but to be honest, he's an idiot."

"Yeah, well, we're not happy with his influence at the moment, either," Astrid admitted, with a frown. "He's nice enough, but what he and Siri did was plain stupid. Even if she is sorry."

"We'll sort that out later, though," Hiccup cut in, wincing as Snotlout continued his rant toward his younger sons. "We better get this treasure hunt sorted. By the way," he added with a grin towards Lennart. "Thanks for your help. Your last few clues were pretty good."

Lennart chuckled. "Thanks, I thought you'd like it. It's just a shame Seer didn't help."

"She will next year, I'm sure," Anna said, before she handed Hiccup another note. "Good luck."

"Thanks, Anna," Hiccup said, as he took the note from her. "I'll meet you guys back at the hall."

"See you there," Lennart said, before he glanced up at the upper level. "If dad ever stops yelling, anyway."

"He will," Anna assured him with a sigh. "I'll go and put an end to it, now. See you guys later," she added, before she went upstairs to rescue her two younger sons, as Hiccup and Astrid walked off, reading their next clue as they went.

"From your home to your friend's, now head west to the place where your childhood was best," Hiccup read, with a frown filling his features. "Okay, now which one of us are they talking about?" he questioned, glancing up at Astrid in bewilderment. "That could mean either of our places."

"Read it, Hiccup," Astrid said, pointing at the clue. "It says \_west. \_And west from here is \_your \_place." She shook her head with a grin. "And here I thought \_you\_ were supposed to be the smart one?"

"You're smart, too, don't pull that one on me," Hiccup said with a smile. "My house it is, then." He glanced down at the map. "I wonder how many of these things the kids \_did\_."

"Twelve by the looks of the points on the map," Astrid said, as she gestured to the little dots. "They really worked it out."

"Well, that's Siri's handwriting," Hiccup noted, as he spotted a few notes written in the corner of the page. "So at least she helped with something before Lennart had to step in." The man sighed. "I know she's sorry and all, but we're right aren't we? She has to be grounded for this, doesn't she? Even if she came today or not. I mean," he glanced around at the fire protection systems, which were only half repaired, "it was a fairly stupid thing to do."

Astrid sighed. "No," she agreed. "As much as I know we did stupid things too, she has to know she can't get away with it either. No matter how sorry she is. But we'll figure out her grounding when we get back to the hall later. Now's not the time."

"I guess," Hiccup sighed, just as he and Astrid reached his childhood home, only to be greeted by Valka, who was sitting on the top step waiting for them. Upon seeing her, Hiccup frowned in bewilderment. "Mum? What are you doing here?" he asked, as Valka stood up to greet them with a smile. "I thought you were staying at the Great Hall?"

"I thought it would be fun to actually join in myself instead of just hiding the note in the house," Valka grinned as she handed her son the next note. "Besides," she added with a quick glance towards the Great Hall, "nobody's back yet, and there's no way I was staying with Gobber as he sings 'I love my axe and I love my mace' for what could possibly be the \_one hundredth time today\_."

"Urgh, tell me about it," Hiccup said dryly, as Astrid groaned beside him. "You'd think after all these years he'd learn a new song."

Valka chuckled. "Well, it gave me an excuse to come back home to give you the note in person, I guess," she said cheerfully, as Hiccup unfolded the paper. "I didn't want to just hide it in the house and hope you find it. Not when Leif asked me to take one."

"Yeah, well, it seems like the kids asked everyone we're close too,"



Astrid chuckled, as Hiccup read the note. "They aren't leaving anyone out."

"How did they even come up with this idea?" Valka asked her daughter-in-law, her tone impressed. "It's genius!"

"No idea," Astrid grinned, proudly. "But they've given us the most fun we've had in ages." She looked over at Hiccup as he started to chuckle beside her. "What is it?" she asked him, curiously. "Where are they sending us now?"

"From the west to the south, return now to the house where you learnt all your skills," Hiccup read out with a grin. "Not as poetic, but it's obviously your parent's house now."

"Of course," Astrid chuckled, before she quickly turned towards Valka. "We'll see you back at the Great Hall," she said, as she began to follow Hiccup towards her parent's house, where her parents quickly presented their daughter with the next clue to head to the plaza, which in turn led them to the stables.

"Please tell me this is the last clue?" Hiccup said, as he leant against the stable door with a stitch in his side. "I don't remember the last time I walked this much."

"And yet, you're still as skinny as a twig," Astrid teased, throwing her husband a grin, who emitted a low chuckle.

"And coming from you, I take that as a compliment, milady," Hiccup grinned, stepping forward to give his wife a peck on the lips, making her flush brightly, as Hiccup glanced around the stables, with narrowed eyes.

"Where's this note even supposed to be?" Hiccup said, as he glanced around the empty stables. "Was there any clues?"

"Not really," Astrid said, as she dug the previous note out of her pocket. "From the heart of the village, go to the place where the once enemies sleep." She glanced up at Hiccup with narrowed eyes. "Well, that is the dragons," she admitted, slowly, "but where are we supposed to look?"

"It is pretty vague," Hiccup admitted. "But do you think the kids made it that way on pur-...arrgh!"

"Are you alright?" Astrid asked, spinning around in time to see Toothless suddenly tackle his friend on the ground from behind. Seeing this, Astrid howled with laughter, as the Night Fury began to lick the man straight up the face.

"Oh, ew, Toothless!" Hiccup exclaimed, as he tried to cover his face with his hands. "That's seriously gross, bud! You couldn't have picked a better way to announce you were here?" Stopping his attack, Toothless threw his friend an incredulous look. "I guess not," Hiccup sighed, as he dragged himself off the ground. "What are you even doing here, bud? I thought you were staying with the kids?"

Giving his friend a wide gummy smile, Toothless animatedly gestured to his saddle; his tongue sticking out like a hyperactive dog. Eyebrows knitted together in bewilderment, Hiccup quickly opened the

satchel hung on the side of the dragon's saddle, only to reveal a rolled up scroll, tied very neatly with a ribbon.

"Let me guess," Astrid said, with an amused shake of her head, "that's the next clue isn't it?"

"More like the\_ last\_ clue," Hiccup said, excitement building in his tone, as he began to read it out. "With every friend who has helped you today, it's time for us to help you. Your present is hidden in a place of fond memories, and with that, we will show our love for everything you done." Hiccup glanced up at Astrid, with a perplexed expression. "Fond memories, where are they..." Stopping mid-sentence, Hiccup suddenly broke into a wide smile. "The cove," he said, slowly, with a loving smile towards his wife. "Why didn't I figure \_that\_ out?"

"Because it would have been boring if you had," Astrid chuckled softly, as affection fluttered in her stomach for her three children. "But they certainly know us well. Come on, then," she said, with a gesture to move forward. "We better go and get our present, before it gets dark."

"Fine," Hiccup smiled. "But this time we're going on Toothless. If I walk one more step, I might just lose my\_ other\_ leg."

\* \* \*

><p>"Can you see them yet?"<p>

"How many times do you need to ask that? No, I \_don't\_ \_see\_ them yet."

"But it's been \_ages,\_ " Leif pointed out, as he scrambled to see the entrance to the cove. "Shouldn't they be back by now?"

"It's not dusk yet," Valka reminded the boy gently, as she too looked towards the entrance. "They still have plenty of time. They shouldn't be \_too\_ much longer, though."

"I hope not," Gobber chuckled. "Or everyone else will be starting the celebrations without us."

"What if we made the clues too hard?" Ingrid asked, looking up at her older sister with worry in her eyes, who glanced back down at the five year old with a laugh.

"I don't think so, Ingrid," Siri said, in amusement. "It's probably all the walking that's done it. Not the clues."

Leif snorted. "I think you're right," the eight year old grinned, as he nodded his head towards the sky above them. "There they are now; on Toothless." Leif chuckled. "Looks like dad couldn't take all the walking after all!" he exclaimed loudly, as Toothless came in to land beside them.

"Hey, in my defence, my metal leg isn't what it used to be," Hiccup pointed out, as he and Astrid hopped off the saddle; Hiccup wincing slightly as the metal leg met the ground. "So, this is where you guys have been hiding all day! If I'd known, it would have made it \_a lot\_ easier."

"And where's the fun in that?" Siri grinned, as she rushed over to engulf her dad in a hug. "Happy Appreciation Day!" she exclaimed cheerfully, before she moved to give her mum a hug as well. "So, did you like our little treasure hunt?" she asked them. "Leif and Ingrid thought it would be good to do something really different this year."

"And it was a brilliant idea," Astrid said proudly, as she opened her arms up for her two youngest children, who didn't hesitate to bound into them. "This had to be one of the best ideas you three have ever come up with. Thank you."

"So, we didn't make the clues too hard?" Ingrid asked them, joyfully, as Hiccup scooped his little girl up in his arms.

"They were just fine, sweetie," Hiccup reassured her, kindly, pressing a kiss to her cheek, while he gave Leif a one armed hug in the process. "It was the most fun I've had in ages, to be honest. Think you can do it again next year?" he asked the three kids hopefully, who all groaned in unison as soon as he said it.

"I don't think so, dad," Siri said, with a laugh. "This was a lot harder to set up than it looks."

"Especially the notes," Leif pointed out, with a disgruntled look on his face. "I'm glad Len ended up helping with those, because it was hard."

"So was trying to find a place to hide your present so you wouldn't snoop," Gobber pointed out, with a grin towards Hiccup, as Siri moved uncomfortably beside them. "It isn't easy to hide presents from you."

"Yeah, well," Hiccup began, as everyone howled with laughter beside him, "I've decided I like to be surprised, so there'll be no more snooping from me."

"Until next year, when he just so happens to forget that promise," Astrid muttered.

"Thanks for the vote of confidence, Astrid," Hiccup said, dryly, as everyone around him laughed once more.

"Happy to help, sweetie," Astrid said, with a grin, causing Hiccup to roll his eyes in amusement, just as Gobber gestured to the kids to help him with the present.

"Well, promise or not, you deserve a reward for putting up with our treasure hunt," Siri said, as she, Leif, Ingrid and Gobber picked up something from behind a large boulder, before putting it in Hiccup and Astrid's line of sight. "Happy Appreciation Day, mum and dad. We hope you like it. Gobber spent ages on it."

"Oh, wow," Astrid said in awe, as Hiccup's eyes widened in amazement, as Gobber and the kids presented the couple with a cloth bundle, a single leather strap holding the cloth on the present. As Hiccup undid the strap and Astrid pulled away the cloths, their eyes squinted as the sun struck the quicksilver-shiny steel circling the outside of an ornate shield bearing the Haddock family crest - a

single carved haddock fish, with an astrid bloom similarly carved into the wood beside it. Between the ring of glistening silver and the outside edge of the shield the word "Haddock" had been burnt, following the curve of the top two thirds of the shield, with the names of the current family members burnt - in much smaller print - into the remaining third of the shield.

"That is...amazing," Astrid said, in a total loss for words.

"And what's with the crest?" Hiccup asked them, surprised. "I mean, I know your mother and I suggested that to be our family crest, but we've never actually used it before..."

"Until now," Siri pointed out, proudly. "You've been talking about wanting it to do this crest for \_years\_, so, we decided to give it to you."

"Did you come up with this?" Hiccup asked her, astonished.

"She came up with it \_weeks \_ago," Gobber confirmed with a toothy grin. "Asked me to help her with the design and all."

"It was all we had until me and Ingrid came up with the treasure hunt," Leif said, with a smile towards the shield. "It'd be boring just giving you a present." He looked up his parents with a nervous smile. "So— do you like it?"

"We love it, guys!" Astrid exclaimed, contentedly, as she pulled the three kids into a hug. "It's amazing."

"It's about time we had our own family shield," Hiccup added, with a proud smile flickering across his face. "It's great, guys. Thank you."

"You're welcome," Ingrid said sweetly, causing everyone to chuckle, before she yawned suddenly. "Can we go now?" she asked, innocently, causing Hiccup and Astrid to laugh.

" Yeah, we better head back to the Great Hall to be honest," Valka pointed out, as she gestured to the orangey tinge beginning to spread across the sky. "Everyone will be getting to the Great Hall by now, and we better not be late. Let's get going."

\* \* \*

><p>"Well, another Appreciation Day has come and gone!" Gobber announced, as soon as the last family entered the packed hall a little while later. "And from what I've heard, it has been one of the best in years. Although we seemed to have also had some...urgh...<em>incidents<em> as well..."

"Yeah, I don't think my dad is finished with Sig and Bjorn, yet," Lennart muttered quietly to Siri, as the families around them listened attentively to Gobber. "He was still pretty peeved when we headed back here."

"He \_looks\_ it," Siri noted, as she took a quick glance towards Snotlout, who was holding his one year old daughter protectively, whilst staring sternly towards the boys. "I've never known a man to be so \_protective\_."

"You're telling me," Lennart mumbled, before they turned their attention back to Gobber in front.

"So, from everyone here, and our chief, who had quite the adventurous day himself," Gobber added with a grin towards Hiccup, "we hope you've had a heck of a day." He raised his mug. "Happy Takknemlighet Day!"

"Happy Takknemlighet Day!" the throng of Vikings echoed, drinking their mugs of ale and water, before the chatter began to build around them as families began to exchange their accounts of the day.

"So, how did your day end up?" Lennart asked Siri, with a small smile, as he looked over at Hiccup and Astrid, talking cheerfully with Valka, Amund and Ansfrida. "Your parents don't look as if they're mad at you anymore."

"Oh, they still are," Siri assured him, quietly. "They just don't want to talk about it here. I mean, I do know I'll be punished, but I doubt it'll be as long as they said. I don't deserve \_that \_much."

"You don't deserve it at \_all,\_" came Gerold's voice as he squeezed through the throng of Vikings to get to them, making Lennart groan in annoyance at the sight of the older boy. "Are you seriously still going to take a grounding for a stupid prank?"

"It wasn't just a stupid prank, and you know it, Gerold," Siri pointed out, patiently. "I mean, we did put out \_all \_the fire systems. Besides, it won't be \_that \_much of a grounding. Mum and dad make it sound worse than it is."

"And if they do?" the fifteen year old asked.

"I won't be happy, that's for damn sure," Siri admitted, with a narrowed glance towards her parents. "I mean, I joined in today, didn't I? And it was \_fun. \_Surely they wouldn't be that unfair?"

"I guess not," Gerold sighed. "Although, I have to admit," he went on, quickly flicking his eyes towards his own family, "today wasn't \_so \_bad for me either. But I still think I'm getting too old for it," he added quickly.

"Well, eventually we will be," Lennart pointed out to the older boy. "Just not yet."

"Well, for me it is, anyway" Gerold said, with a shrug. "But not everyone has to agree with me. Anyway," he said, as he heard his sister call out to him from nearby, "send me a message if you would to escape your grounding, Seer."

"I'm sure I'll be fine," Siri chuckled, as she gave him a swift kiss on the cheek. "I told you; my parents won't make me do the two weeks. I'll see you in a week."

"Alright," Gerold said. "Meet me if not, though." He smiled softly at her. "I'll see you later."

"See you," Siri smiled, as Gerold made his way back over towards his

family.

"Honestly, what is with him?" Lennart said; annoyance clearly evident in his tone. "It's like he thinks teenagers are above being punished."

Siri giggled. "He doesn't mean it," she said. "He just likes to be a little rebellious, that's all. He's just as much of a kid as the both of us."

"Whatever you say," Lennart sighed. "But I think he's a bit of a jerk. No offense," he quickly added, seeing Siri's raised eyebrows.

"Well, I don't see it," Siri shrugged. "That's just him being Gerold. He thinks it's a teenager's responsibility to be rebellious. It never works."

"Siri!" Astrid's voice called out, making the fourteen year old jump a little. "Siri, it's time to head home," she said, as she approached the two teenagers. "Your sister is a little tired. Plus we still need to talk about your punishment as well," she added, a little awkwardly.

Siri sighed. "Yeah, I guess," she said quietly.

"Good," Astrid said. "Let's get going, then." She turned to Lennart with a smile. "Sorry to leave you, Len, but its best we go now."

"It's alright," the fourteen year old assured her. "I'll be fine. Good luck, Seer," he added in undertone, as Astrid went to collect Leif and Ingrid.

Siri smiled. "Don't worry, Len, I'll be fine."

\* \* \*

><p>"What do you mean I'm still grounded?! But...but I said I was sorry! And I made up for it today, didn't I? Why are you doing this?!"<p>

"Siri!" Astrid exclaimed, causing Siri's blabbering to temporarily cease, although the look of thunder on her face said otherwise. "I know you've apologised. You've said it a hundred times already-

"Then why isn't it enough?!" Siri demanded, her face glowing brighter by the minute. "I know what I did was wrong, why do I need to be grounded for two weeks?"

"Siri Astrid Haddock, that's enough!" Hiccup said, sternly, causing Siri to bite her tongue once again. "We are not doing this to spite you, no matter what you might think," he added quickly, seeing Siri was about to retort. "Yes, you're used to us letting you off lighter if you do something to make it up to us, but this isn't about you making it up to us, it's about you endangering the entire village, and that cannot go unnoticed."

"But grounding me for two weeks?!" Siri retorted, angrily. "How is

that fair? And not letting me see Gerold? What's that going to achieve?!"

"More maturity from the both of you, I hope," Astrid replied, coolly, unfazed by the glare her daughter was giving her. "Siri, I know you and Gerold are teenagers, and with this age, comes a bit of rebellion, but what you and Gerold did was completely stupid! You put us all in danger by putting those fire systems out of order, and I don't think you even realise what you've done wrong."

"I know what I did was wrong!" Siri exclaimed, incredulously, throwing her hands up in the air. "Haven't I already said that?!"

"If you had, you would have thought of the consequences that letting a wild dragon in the village would have caused," Hiccup pointed out, causing Siri to fall silent. "But you didn't. You were complacent, and because of that, it could have ended up being a lot worse than it was. Do you understand?"

Siri mumbled something in response.

"Siri," Astrid said, firmly, causing the fourteen year old to look up at her; tears swimming in her bright azure eyes. "\_Do you understand\_"

"Yes," Siri said quietly, as she glanced between the two of them. "But why can't I see Gerold?\_ I\_ made the decision to join in with those pranks; he didn't force me. And he's just going to keep going with them, even without me there," she added. "He's trying to prove he's not a kid anymore. He's not trying to stir up trouble."

"And it's because of that reason that the both of you \_are s\_till children," Hiccup said, as he folded his arms in front of his chest. "If you have to go around doing things like this, it just proves that you're not mature enough to be treated anything differently. Maybe some time apart from you will make Gerold see this. I doubt he's as happy as you that he won't see you for two weeks."

"He's not," Siri muttered.

"And that's precisely why we're doing this, Seer," Astrid explained gently. "Siri, we're not doing this to spite you. We're doing this so you understand what you did wrong. We know you're sorry. But I want you to prove to us that you are by accepting this like a mature person."

"Can I at least go outside?" Siri asked, heatedly, refusing to meet her parent's eyes.

"You know the answer to that, Siri," Hiccup said, with a sigh. "You can go outside the house until the top of the hill, but that's all. It's no different to any other grounding you've had."

"Except this time, I'm stuck in the house for \_two weeks\_," Siri muttered, as she made her way towards the staircase. "I'm going to bed. I'll see you later."

"Seer," Astrid said, softly, as Siri reached the top of the stairs. "I\_ know\_ you're not happy with us, but please understand we're not

doing this to upset you."

Siri sighed. "I know," she said quietly, before she headed towards her room without another word. Passing Leif's room, she saw him peek out of his door, with an apologetic look on his face.

"I'm sorry, Seer," Leif said, quietly, as he gave her a sad smile. "I know you didn't want to get in so much trouble. But you can still play with me and Ingrid if you want?"

Siri smiled, despite herself. "Thanks, Leif. I'll see you in the morning."

Upon entering her bedroom, Siri went immediately over to her bed, before collapsing onto it with a heavy sigh. Hearing her friend enter the room, Midnight raised her head up and fixed the girl with a questioning glare.

Siri smiled. "I'm alright, Midnight," the teenager said, as she stared up at the ceiling. "I'm just...annoyed...I guess. I mean, I know it's my fault, but...urgh!" She exclaimed angrily, throwing her hands up in the air. "\_Two weeks?\_ Are they serious?" she added with a mumble. She shook her head in annoyance. "This room's going to be my best friend for a while." Sitting up, she flicked her eyes around the room, before they landed on her desk in the far corner of the room. A thought suddenly crossed her mind. Biting her lip, she made a move to get up, but quickly shaking her head, she fell back onto the bed, and closed her eyes; annoyance radiating every part of her body. A few moments passed.

Siri opened her eyes, and glanced over towards the desk, before getting up and making her way over to it. Sitting down upon the chair, she pulled a piece of paper towards her, and grabbed a pencil, before glancing out the window in thought. She placed it down again.

Tapping her fingers on the desk, Siri glanced around the room. Just as she was about to make a move to get up again, she heard her parents walk past her room, their whispers decreasing as they went past her door, before rising slightly as they went past it, before she heard the click of their bedroom door as it closed. The house was silent once again.

Mind made up, Siri quickly snatched the pencil up off the desk, and quickly glancing out the window at the star lit sky, she slowly began to scribble.

\_Gerold,\_

\_About that offer to meet. Give me a time and place. I'll meet you there.\_

\_Siri.\_

\* \* \*

><p><em>Uh oh. I think you can tell this is NOT going to end well!  
You have no idea how long I've been playing that little ending!  
<em>



\_OK, so as you can tell, things are about to ramp up. Siri isn't happy and she's slowly starting to go against her parents, and this is just going to get worse. I wanted to do a storyline that shows that even someone like Siri isn't immune to the rebelliousness that is the teenage years, and with her personality, she was even more susceptible to this than Lennart, or other kids. Lucky for me, I skipped this phase as a teenager, although I did, and still do, have an attitude problem, but I saw this happen quite often in school and 14/15 is the age it usually begins. Siri did feel guilty in this chapter for what she did, but being punished by her parents set her off and just made things worse. That's what happened to me when I did get in trouble at this age, so it's not like she changed quickly or anything, it was always there. Most teenagers feel like their parents are against them for no reason, despite what they do.\_

\_By the way, the notes in this chapter for the treasure hunt weren't supposed to be perfect as they were written by the kids. Thank goodness, as well! I suck at rhyming, so I'm glad the kids were writing these as it made it a lot easier for me! Although I have to admit some of them turned out a lot better than I expected.\_

\_Alright, so the next chapter is going to be a three part story, and one I've been planning since the very beginning! I've written up summaries of what will happen and have started plans, and what I can say is that it's going to get tense. \_\_\*\*Hiccup and Astrid are at a loss at what to do when Siri starts to become more and more involved in Gerold and his group, getting to the point where the couple don't even know their own daughter anymore. And what makes it worse is that Siri is drifting away from everyone who cares for her, including Lennart, and getting herself into dangerous situations. \*\*\_\_This will\_ \_take place about 7 months after this chapter when Siri is 15 and from what I can say, you're going to see a VERY different side to Siri then you're used to. She won't be getting into situations that occurs with teens today like drugs or alcohol, but it's still going to be reckless or the same. \_

\_Ok, so, once again \_\_\*\*DON'T FORGET TO REVIEW!\*\*\_\_ Just remember, once again, that NO FLAMES WILL BE TOLERATED, although KIND constructive criticism is fine!\_

\_Thanks for reading! :D Next chapter should be up next month sometime, depending on planning and how busy I am. \_

End  
file.